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# THE SPRING





# THE SPRING

*A Play*

By

GEORGE CRAM COOK

NEW YORK

FRANK SHAY

1921

✓ DAL 1076. 1. 9



*Fine money*

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# THE SPRING

*(Synopsis)*

PRELUDE    October, 1813.

SCENE I    } An October afternoon a hundred years  
SCENE II    } later.

SCENE III Evening.

SCENE IV Midnight.

SCENE V    Sunday afternoon.

SCENE VI Twilight.

The place is Namequa's Spring on Rock River, a few miles above its confluence with the Mississippi.

THE SPRING  
PERSONS of the PRELUDE

NAM-E-QUA, *Daughter of Black Hawk.*  
SINGING BIRD (Ash-e-qua), *Wife of Black Hawk.*  
NA-SOM-SEE, *Son of Black Hawk.*  
ELIJAH ROBBINS, *An American Scout.*  
JOHN STREET, *his companion.*  
BLACK HAWK (Ma-ka-tai-me-she-kia-kiak),  
*War Chief of the Sauks.*

WAT-TAI-SAI      *Sauk warriors.*  
TI-A-MA

*The Village Crier of Sauk-e-nauk.*

This happened by the spring late one afternoon in  
October, 1813, near the chief village of the Sauks.

PERSONS of the PLAY

IRA ROBBINS, *Grandson of Elijah, father of  
Elijah III.*

MRS. CAROLINE ROBBINS, *His Wife.*

WILLIAM CHANTLAND, *Head of the University De-  
partment of Psychology.*

ESTHER CHANTLAND, *His Daughter.*

ELIJAH ROBBINS III.

DR. HADLEY, *Professor of Nervous Diseases.*

JOHNSON, *Attendant in the Psychiatric Department  
of the Hospital.*

NURSE, *From the same institution.*

LOUIE WILLIAMS, *Dr. Hadley's Chauffeur.*

DR. SHELDON, *Dean of the Medical School.*

JUDGE PARSONS.

This happened in an October week-end a century  
later on the same spot.

## C A S T

Of the first production by the Provincetown Players,  
January 24th, 1921.

### PRELUDE

NAM-E-QUA	-----	<i>Jeannie Begg</i>
SINGING BIRD	-----	<i>Jeanne Powers</i>
NA-SOM-SEE	-----	<i>Andrew Fraser</i>
ELIJAH ROBBINS	-----	<i>Charles Sweeney</i>
JOHN STREET	-----	<i>A. K. Miller</i>
BLACK HAWK	-----	<i>Harold McGee</i>
TI-A-MA	-----	<i>Don Miller</i>
WAT-TAI-SAI	-----	<i>Harry Gottlieb</i>
VILLAGE CRIER	-----	<i>Alan Mac Ateer</i>

### PLAY

IRA ROBBINS	-----	<i>Harold McGee</i>
MRS. ROBBINS	-----	<i>Lucy Shreve</i>
WILLIAM CHANTLAND	-----	<i>Howard Smith</i>
ESTHER CHANTLAND	-----	<i>Lark Bronlee</i>
ELIJAH ROBBINS III	-----	<i>William Rainey</i>
DR. HADLEY	-----	<i>Clement O'Loughlen</i>
JOHNSON	-----	<i>A. K. Miller</i>
NURSE	-----	<i>Jeannie Begg</i>
LOUIE WILLIAMS	-----	<i>Harry Gottlieb</i>
DR. SHELDON	-----	<i>Arnold Schwartz</i>
JUDGE PARSONS	-----	<i>Alan Mac Ateer</i>



# THE SPRING

## PRELUDE

*The spring is in the left foreground. Low rocks dip from right and left to its basin. The sound of it is heard continuously. Light reflected from its small circular pool plays up into the faces of those who bend over it. The sunlight comes in level from the left. Behind the spring stands an immense white oak tree whose branching foliage roofs the scene. Behind the tree a grotto-like arch in the base of a rocky hill. Deep center grows a white-oak sapling. To the right a thicket. A sharply ascending path goes off right behind the thicket to the hill-top, another, in front of the thicket, running off right, will reach and ascend Rock River along its north bank. The path going off left front leads to Sauk-e-nauk. Nam-e-qua is discovered alone by the Spring. She sits in the quietude of contemplation which goes richly. She wears the colors of the scene. She has been painting a black bird with spread wings on the stretched skin of a shallow drum. Beside her a stiff skin is folded into a small oblong trunk. By the spring a water-jar, a brown earthenware cup and a small jar for magic. This contains six kernels of corn and*



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*six quartz crystals. Singing Bird comes in left front from the Village.*

SINGING BIRD

Nam-e-quā! Your brother Na-som-see—where is he?

NAM-E-QUA

On the river. He went to fish. Why is your heart heavy, mother-bird? Is not my father back from the battle unhurt?

SINGING BIRD

Today when I husked the corn, I fell asleep, and—dreamed.

NAM-E-QUA

Of what?

SINGING BIRD

Of a bird and snake. The bird was caught by the foot in the cleft of a dead tree trunk. The snake was climbing. I woke in fear.

NAM-E-QUA

Bird of what color?

SINGING BIRD

Black.

NAM-E-QUA

Black Hawk? Where is Black Hawk?

SINGING BIRD

He went at dawn to fast and pray by the grave of Na-na-ma-kee. He thinks the Great Spirit is not pleased with him, or he would not have lost the battle at the fort. (*She looks into the small jar.*) The crystals?

NAM-E-QUA

Six, and six kernels of corn.

SINGING BIRD

Set them as the prophet did around the spring,  
and look and see if any vision will make clear  
the dream. (*Nam-e-qua smooths the sand  
around the spring as though smoothing the  
mind. She takes crystals and kernels, and with  
self-hypnotizing rhythm sets them in a magic  
pattern. Suddenly she stops, arrested by what  
forms in the spring.*) Vision?

NAM-E-QUA

My father! He sits in thought. A white scout  
lies in ambush. My father does not see. The  
paleface raises his head and looks. My father  
does not see. The enemy lifts his musket—he  
aims—(*She suppresses a scream*).

SINGING BIRD

What then? What then? Did he fire? Did  
Black Hawk fall?

NAM-E-QUA (*peering in vain*)

It is gone. I see no more. Is this to be?

SINGING BIRD

He thinks no enemy can harm him while he is  
in the Spirit.

NAM-E-QUA

The vision is the Spirit's warning! Rouse the  
warriors and send them up the hill.

SINGING BIRD

There are none in the village. They are hunting  
and fishing. What shall we do?

NAM-E-QUA (*making her hands a trumpet directed up back to the right*) Black Hawk! (*Pause.*)  
Black Hawk! (*They listen.*)

SINGING BIRD

He will hear nothing.

NAM-E-QUA

I will run for Na-som-see. But there were two in the village—Wat-tai-sai and Ti-a-ma. They came from the sunrise with my father. They were asleep in the lodge of Na-mah. Send them with weapons up the hill.

SINGING BIRD (*going swiftly*)

Yes. But fetch Na-som-see. (*Nam-e-qua starts off right front up the river, but sees her crystals. She runs back, gathers them into the jar, then starts to run, but looking forward on her path, stops abruptly.*)

(*Na-som-see comes running from right front. He sees her but passes toward the left, not intending to stop.*)

NAM-E-QUA

Where are you going, Na-som-see?

NA-SOM-SEE (*stopping*)

Who was shouting 'Black Hawk'?

NAM-E-QUA (*after pointing to herself*)

Go up quickly to the grave of Na-na-ma-kee. Black Hawk is there in prayer. Our mother dreamed. In the spring the vision showed a white scout firing at our father.

NA-SOM-SEE

I have seen more than a vision. I saw five white

skulkers in a hollow up the river. They trailed my father from the fort, and now they're trailing me.

NAM-E-QUA

Then the vision is true!

NA-SOM-SEE

I must rouse the warriors and lead them back.

NAM-E-QUA

There are only two. Our mother has gone for them. Go up the hill.

NA-SOM-SEE

Two? Those five could burn our lodges! Well. I make three.

NAM-E-QUA

Bring Black Hawk down. He will make four.

NA-SOM-SEE (*looking off left front*)

Those women husking. Tell them to run and call in the fishers. Quick!

NAM-E-QUA

But our father? *She looks up the path to the hill.*) He will not see them coming.

NA-SOM-SEE

The whites will not go up the hill.

NAM-E-QUA

I saw the white scout aim at him!

NA-SOM-SEE

How can I protect him without men? Do as I I bid you. (*He points imperiously to the village. She looks back despairingly, then obeys, passing in front of him to the left. He gives a keen look back along his trail, then swiftly fol-*



*lows. The woods are silent. The light is turning to red gold—the light of the Mississippi valley sunset.)*

*(Elijah Robbins and Jack Street enter furtively right front, crouching and peering ahead, reading Na-som-see's trail. They stop center, looking right rear and left front.)*

ROBBINS *(suddenly ducking down)*

Look out „Jack! Women workin' in that field. Don't let 'em see us. *(They lie down behind the rocks of the spring and peer left front.)*

STREET

Robbins; we're runnin' straight into the biggest Indian town on the continent. That'll be Sauk-e-nauk around that bend. *(He points.)* That's where that young buck went. I tell you he saw us. There'll be a hornet's nest here shortly. It's too hot for me. I'm goin' back.

ROBBINS

Which way?

STREET

East. Fort Dearborn. If I make it.

ROBBINS

It does look warm. The boys were right. If we scatter they won't get all of us. I'm for the trader's on Rock Island. I'll try this trail up over the hill, and then head north. What's this? Look at the pretty spring!

STREET

We ain't got time.

ROBBINS *(looking into the skin trunk)*

Some red-skinned lady's work-basket. And look at these sparklers. (*He shakes the crystals and kernels into his hand.*) Wha' d'ye think o' that? Di'munds or somethin' mixed in with kernels o' corn! Some sort o' big medicine!

STREET

Leavin' jewelry! Looks to me like somebody left here in a hurry—just a minute ago. Mebbe after they saw us comin'. (*This grows on him.*) Say! I bin here long enough. Goodbye!! (*He gets up abruptly and goes off left front.*)

ROBBINS

Goodbye, Jack.

STREET (*calling back*)

Get out o' here, Robbins. Get out o' here quick—if ye want to live.

ROBBINS

In a minute. Good luck to you.

STREET (*from off*)

Same to you!

(*Robbins drops the corn back in the jar and sets it down. He takes out his handkerchief, ties the crystals in a corner, and drops it in his pocket. He takes out a new flint, sets it, and primes his musket. He looks toward the village, then up the hill trail. He spies an earthenware cup by the spring, fills it, drinks, takes one more look around, listens, collects himself, then goes slow and alert up the hill. After a considerable moment—filled by the sound of the spring—Robbins comes back excited, looking back. He stops*

*left front uncertain for an instant, sees the bushes, jumps into them and lies hidden. Black Hawk comes slowly down the hill trail. Pondering, he crosses to the spring. He sets down his great medicine-bag and his musket, sits, and still thinking drinks. Robbins' head lifts warily from the thicket. His jaw sets, he rises enough to get a bead on Black Hawk's back, and pulls the trigger. The hammer crashes down but there is no report. Black Hawk whirls and covers the spot where the white man dropped out of sight.)*

BLACK HAWK

Rise, enemy, or I fire.

ROBBINS

Don't fire!

BLACK HAWK (*standing up*)

Rise—and drop that gun! (*Robbins rises, hands up.*) Throw down your knife. (*Robbins obeys.*) Come forward. Stand there. (*Black Hawk picks up the knife, circles still covering, and picks the musket from under the bush.*) See if it miss now. (*He fires it in the air and listens. A far-off war-whoop answers.*)

ROBBINS (*shrinking*)

Torture!

(*He leaps at Black Hawk so suddenly that he gets past the muzzle unshot. Black Hawk fires, but too late, and drops his gun. Robbins snatches his own knife from Black Hawk's belt, and strikes at his heart. Black Hawk catches his*

*wrist and twists it, turning Robbins around down with his arm bent behind him in an excruciating leverage. Black Hawk shouts his war-cry twice. There is an answering shout a hundred feet away. Then, at a command like "Swoop!" Na-som-see, Wat-tai-sai, and Ti-a-ma come like hawks from the left, stoop to lay down their trailed muskets as they run, throw themselves upon Robbins and pinion him.)*

**BLACK HAWK**

His knife! Get it. (*Na-som-see wrenches it from his grip. Black Hawk disentagles himself and looks at his enemy.*) He is brave. (*He goes to the painted trunk, takes a leather thong, and throws it to Na-som-see.*) Tie him. (*They tie his hands behind him. Nam-e-qua and Singing Bird run in from the left, looking with quick, concentrated attention at Black Hawk.*)

**SINGING BIRD**

Safe!

**NAM-E-QUA**

Unwounded! (*After making sure of this, she looks at Robbins.*) It is he.

**BLACK HAWK**

He?

**NAM-E-QUA**

In the spring—a vision—I saw him aim at you.  
Did he fire?

**BLACK HAWK**

From the thicket.

NA-SOM-SEE

And missed?

BLACK HAWK

Man-i-to gave the flint and steel no child of fire.

NA-SOM-SEE

Missed fire? Who fired the shots?

BLACK HAWK

I. His gun to call you. Mine too late—he was past the muzzle. He is brave.

SINGING BIRD

The dream was true.

NAM-E-QUA

Na-som-see should have heeded the vision. He should have gone up the hill.

NA-SOM-SEE

If you saw in the spring what was to be—it was to be. See if he has pistols, Ti-a-ma.

*(Ti-a-ma, searching, pulls out the handkerchief, feels the crystals, restores it to Robbins' pocket. Nam-e-qua's attitude toward the handkerchief is that of keen listening. She goes and looks in her jar and misses the crystals.)*

NAM-E-QUA

The magic stars are gone! What was in that cloth, Ti-a-ma?

TI-A-MA

Not a weapon.

ROBBINS

I took the stars. I would give them back to you if my hands weren't tied.

NAM-E-QUA

You *stole* them!

ROBBINS

Just took them for souvenirs. Didn't know they were yours, or—

NAM-E-QUA (*coldly*)

Give me that cloth, Ti-a-ma.

*(He gives it, she takes out the crystals, throws the handkerchief on the ground, puts the crystals in the jar and holds it protectingly under her arm.)*

ROBBINS

Sorry you feel that way about it. I admit I was wrong; but you are wrong if you take me for a common thief.

NAM-E-QUA

White men are wiser than we if they know how to steal without being thieves.

ROBBINS

It is like a man who is not a liar, but can lie when it is right.

NAM-E-QUA

What made it right to take my stars?

NA-SOM-SEE

Enough talk, Nam-e-qua.

WAT-TAI-SAI

Here comes the village crier scenting a new tale.  
*(The crier enters with an ungainly limp. He has a bell stuck in his belt.)*

CRIER

What is all this? Who is this white-man?

WAT-TAI-SAI

He who fired at Black Hawk.

CRIER

When?

NA-SOM-SEE

The barrel of his musket is still hot.

CRIER

Who captured him?

WAT-TAI-SAI

Black Hawk.

NA-SOM-SEE

With our help.

TI-A-MA

Black Hawk had him.

NA-SOM-SEE

It seems to me I took his knife.

*(He twirls his knife over and catches it. Robbins misunderstands and flinches. Na-som-see repeats the gesture making it this time a threat to throw the knife at Robbins' throat. Robbins fails to conceal his fear.)*

*(With scorn)* Black Hawk calls him brave!

WAT-TAI-SAI

But he steals.

TI-A-MA

He stole Nam-e-quas stars.

CRIER

I have heard a tale that the paleface has no courage under torture.

BLACK HAWK

Their spirits cannot make their bodies painless.

NA-SOM-SEE

We shall know tonight if that tale of the Crier's  
be true.

BLACK HAWK

No.

CRIER

How "No"? Did he try to kill you?

BLACK HAWK

I say no.

CRIER

Shall I cry it in Sauk-e-nauk that it is safe for  
white men to shoot at Black Hawk?

BLACK HAWK

The Father of us both did not save my life from  
him to have me take his life.

ROBBINS

Do you mean that, Black Hawk? Or do you  
add hope as finer torture?

NA-SOM-SEE

Black Hawk talks like a woman!

BLACK HAWK (*controlling anger*)

None but his son would dare say that! Would  
you kill me, Na-som-see, even tho I talk—

NA-SOM-SEE

That is foolish.

BLACK HAWK

If this white boy knew me as you know me, do  
you think he would try to kill me?

ROBBINS

I begin to know you, Black Hawk.



SINGING BIRD

He believed the white man's lies.

NAM-E-QUA

Why did you try to kill my father?

ROBBINS

Chiefly—to get away myself. Perhaps for glory. I did not think of him as a man. I thought of him as—a savage.

NAM-E-QUA

He never hurt a woman or a child or an unarmed man or a small band when his was large.

ROBBINS

He's a tiger in a fight.

NAM-E-QUA

He has slain a hundred warriors with his own hand in equal battle.

NA-SOM-SEE

What loosens your tongue, Nam-e-quas?  
(*Shamed, she goes back to her mother.*) Listen, Sauks, to me. There are five of these skulkers. We have taken one.

BLACK HAWK (*with concern*)

Four others?

NA-SOM-SEE

Within gunshot. (*They all quickly get their muskets. Black Hawk and Wat-tai-sai reload.*) They may attack here to rescue *him*. Ti-a-ma, see if they are aiming at us from the bushes. Their flints may not all miss. (*Warily scouting Ti-a-ma goes right front and off. Na-som-see*

*looks significantly at the captive, then at Black Hawk.)* What do you say?

BLACK HAWK

What do you mean, Na-som-see?

NA-SOM-SEE

We have four fighters to meet those four. None to guard *him* or march him in. What do you say?

BLACK HAWK

If they attack. If not—no.

NA-SOM-SEE

If they are retreating we should follow—not waiting—

ROBBINS

They will not attack.

BLACK HAWK

How do you know?

ROBBINS

They crossed Rock River and went south to Fort Madison.

NA-SOM-SEE

So says the thief who lies when it is right. They have not crossed Rock River.

BLACK HAWK (*goes square in front of Robbins and looks at him.*)

You have not spoken the truth.

ROBBINS

They will not attack. They wish only to get away.

BLACK HAWK (*again reading him by his process of silent absorption*)

That is truer.

NA-SOM-SEE

Father, you are—! Will you believe a word he says?

ROBBINS

Your father knows better than you what to believe.

NA-SOM-SEE

If he were not here you'd tell the truth within ten breaths. Women, go to the village.

NAM-E-QUA

What do you mean! That was not a bad lie. He told it to save his brothers from pursuit.

NA-SOM-SEE

Go to the village. We may be attacked.

ROBBINS

You will not be attacked.

NA-SOM-SEE

I do not take the word of a liar.

ROBBINS

If I ever get loose you'll pay for that, you dirty—  
(*Na-som-see, snarling, leaps at Robbins with his knife. Black Hawk is quick and blocks him.*)

BLACK HAWK

Give me that knife!

(*They stand eye to eye in an intense straight conflict of will. At last Na-som-see with a disdainful gesture throws the knife on the ground.*)

NA-SOM-SEE

Take it!

## BLACK HAWK

Bring me my medicine bag.

*(He points to it. Another conflict. Finally Na-som-see turns, goes for the bag returns gloomily and hands it over. Black Hawk then kneels, placing the medicine-bag against the rock by the spring. He then picks up the knife.)*

You will not knife a Sauk for a sharp word!

*(He cuts the thong binding Robbins' hands. He takes from the bag an amulet.)*

What is your name?

## ROBBINS

Elijah Robbins.

## BLACK HAWK

This amulet is from the sacred medicine-bag transmitted to me from my great grandfather Na-na-ma-kee. It is the soul of the Sauk nation. It has never yet been dishonored. *(He hangs the amulet around Robbins' neck.)* See that you do not dishonor this sign of the Sauk. *(He takes from the bag the peace pipe and fills it.)* It is the peace pipe.

*(He sits. He signs to Elijah to sit at his left. The five men seat themselves in the arc of a circle. Singing Bird goes to the painted trunk, takes tinder, flint and steel and strikes light.)*

Crier: cry this in Sauk-e-nauk. Hear, oh men and women of the Sauks, Elijah Robbins is your brother—adopted into the Sauk nation as the son of Black Hawk.

CRIER (*rises, moves chanting, goes off chanting*)

Hear, oh men and women of the Sauks, Elijah Robbins is your brother—adopted into the Sauk nation as the son of Black Hawk. (*The second chant is more distant, the third fades out. Meanwhile Black Hawk takes from Singing Bird a lighted taper and lights the pipe. He hands it to Robbins.*)

ROBBINS (*takes it, thinks, then speaks deliberately*)

Black Hawk—after what I did—I owe my life to you. You are a second father to me; and I am proud to be your son.

(*He draws and exhales smoke. He passes the pipe to Black Hawk. Black Hawk hands it to Na-som-see. The young Indian's inner feeling of hostility changes in harmony with the symbol of harmony, and with sincerity he adds his cloud of smoke to that of Robbins.*)

NA-SOM-SEE

Let anger fade like smoke.

(*He hands the pipe back to Black Hawk.*)

BLACK HAWK (*he breathes his cloud gently into that of Robbins and Na-som-see*)

As my smoke and your smoke become one smoke,  
so shall your spirit and mine be one!

*The Curtains Close*

## SCENE I.

*(The Curtains open on the same spot a century later. It is now the country place of Elijah Robbins' grandson, Ira. The spring is the same, and the rocky ledge. The great white-oak tree is now a stump, the sapling a large tree. Replacing the thicket is the wide porch of a house. The corner of it which shows is of massive white-oak logs, squared and silvery. A screen door swings out over the porch floor. There is a rug, a bench with cushions, a tea-table, porch chairs, a hammock. Two paths come in from the right rear, one from up the hill as in the Prelude, the other level from around the house.)*

*(By the level path Mr. Ira Robbins enters and comes around to the porch entrance. He limps slightly, using a hooked cane. He has a covered market basket and lawyer's portfolio. He wears a starched "lay-down" collar, small dark bow-tie, grey-blue linen shirt, dark trousers with belt and sack-coat. He is an unstrenuous retired business man of sixty, having rectitude, kindliness, and the tradition of pioneer democracy which keeps him from thinking of himself as a country gentleman on an English model. This because he would not set himself apart from his less wealthy neighbors by "putting on style.")*

IRA

Hello! Anybody home? Oh Caroline!

*(Mrs. Robbins steps out on the porch from the house.)*

MRS. ROBBINS

Why, Ira—where are the others? Wasn't there anybody else on the train?

IRA

Quite a few. But they weren't comin' here. Who'd ye expect? (*He leans his stick against a porch-pillar, extracts his portfolio from under the basket-handle, and sets the basket on the top step.*) There's your marketing.

MRS. ROBBINS

Elijah telephoned he was coming out for the week-end with Professor Chantland and his daughter. (*She looks in the basket.*)

IRA

Maybe they'll motor or take the trolley. Who is Chantland?

MRS. ROBBINS (*investigating the packages*)

Chantland, my dear, is professor of psychology in the university—the head of your son's department—a gentleman whose name it would be well for you not to forget more than seven or eight times more.

IRA

Hmp! Well, I'll be glad to meet him. Good thing Elijah's on such good terms with him—bringing him out over Sunday.

MRS. ROBBINS

It won't hurt his chance of promotion—tho he'd never think of that.

IRA

Elijah's got plenty o' brains and no sense. I'm not saying where he gets his no sense. He gets his brains from his father.

MRS. ROBBINS

Must 'a got all his father had.

IRA

Is he sweet on this professor's daughter?

MRS. ROBBINS

He didn't seem much taken with her at the Faculty reception. Esther is—well—a bit of a wall-flower.

IRA

Is she ugly?

MRS. ROBBINS

No.

IRA

High-brow?

MRS. ROBBINS

Not for Elijah.

IRA

What, then?

MRS. ROBBINS

Oh—queer.

IRA

What about?

MRS. ROBBINS

I don't know exactly. Her mother changes the subject. Her father uses long words.

*(From around the house appears Professor*



*Chantland, a tall man of forty-five, physically powerful, spiritually arid, an embodiment of unimaginative science. He wears a short beard and dresses like a not too well-to-do small town business man.)*

CHANTING (*lifting his hat*)

The Robbins country place?

MRS. ROBBINS

Why, Professor Chantland, how do you do? (*She goes to meet him.*) I am so glad to see you. I suppose you have forgotten that we met at the Faculty reception.

CHANTLAND

Yes, I remember. Well, I'm glad I found the place.

MRS. ROBBINS

Did you come all by yourself?

CHANTLAND

The others wanted to walk. I thought the exercise would be good for Esther's nerves, so I came alone on the trolley. I thought they'd be here. They started soon after luncheon.

MRS. ROBBINS

How is your daughter now?

CHANTLAND

Why—uh—quite well, thank you.

IRA (*whose signals for introduction have been overlooked*)

I am glad to meet you, sir. (*He offers his hand.*)

MRS. ROBBINS

Mr. Robbins, Mr. Chantland.

CHANTLAND

Pleased, I'm sure.

IRA

Let me take your satchel.

CHANTLAND (*retaining it*)

Oh, it's not heavy. I've some work in it. Mr. Elijah Robbins told me you would give me a room off by myself, and not think me ungracious if I stuck in it to get some proofs read.

MRS. ROBBINS

I'll have a perfectly solitary room ready for you in five minutes.

CHANTLAND

Thank you. (*She goes in, taking the market basket. Chantland sets down his bag.*) You have a pleasant place here.

IRA

Hope you won't be too busy to have a look at it.

CHANTLAND

A spring? Right in the door-yard. (*He crosses to it.*) Do you use this water?

IRA

My family have been using it for two hundred years.

CHANTLAND

Two hundred? How can that be when the country has been settled only seventy-five?

IRA

Didn't you know that old Black Hawk adopted my grandfather Elijah Robbins? He lived in the Sauk tribe three years.

CHANTLAND

Elijah Robbins.

IRA

The one you know is Elijah Third.

CHANTLAND

What an interesting link with the history of this region.

IRA

Yes. Elijah First taught me its language, too, when I was a boy.

CHANTLAND

The Indian language? That's an unusual accomplishment. Have you kept it up?

IRA

Well, no—not systematically. But it's odd. I sometimes dream in Sauk. I dream I'm up there on the hill between the grave of Elijah and the grave of Black Hawk's grandfather, and—well, I suppose that's too long. My wife is opposed to telling dreams.

CHANTLAND (*glad to be spared the dream*)

I had no idea there was any such continuous chain of life in this new country.

IRA

It isn't all so new. Take that stump. My grandfather cut that tree in eighteen-forty-three. Look at these rings—one a year. One a year for three hundred and eighty-eight years. That first year there—that's fourteen-fifty-five.

CHANTLAND

Well, well. Before Columbus sailed. What are these?

IRA

Nail-heads. I drove 'em to mark certain years. That's the year of the Black Hawk war. There's the year Elijah joined the Sauk nation.

CHANTLAND

And this one?

IRA

Fourteen-ninety-two. There's the Mayflower year. To see it here still in a ring of wood—the wonder of it!

CHANTLAND

The mystery of existence is felt deeply in this rustic university. I see now where Elijah gets his sense of wonder. Is it something in the region itself—this old sacred country of the Sauks?

IRA (*after looking at him a moment*)

Come up on the hill-top with me. You are a man I want to show it to. Chuck work for an hour. It will do you good.

CHANTLAND

Well. Perhaps you are right. (*Ira gets his stick and they start up the hill path.*) Shouldn't we let Mrs. Robbins know where we've gone?

IRA

She'll guess. (*He stops, looking off right.*) Hello! Here come the walkers. (*Elijah Robbins III and Esther Chantland come*

*from around the house. They stop below Ira and Chantland.)*

ELIJAH

Hello, Dad! Glad to see you. (*He reaches up and shakes hands.*)

IRA

How's Professor Robbins?

ELIJAH

My father, Miss Chantland.

ESTHER

I am glad to meet you, Mr. Robbins. (*She is shy—not at ease all through the scene.*)

CHANTLAND

Has the walk tired you out, Esther?

ESTHER

Not at all.

CHANTLAND

Are you sure you feel all right?

ESTHER

Perfectly.

CHANTLAND

I'm going up the hill with Mr. Robbins.

IRA

Won't you two come with us?

ELIJAH (*crossing to the spring*)

I think we've had about enough walk for a while. (*To Chantland.*) When my father gets through with you, you'll be so full of Indian history that you'll come down whooping. (*Mrs. Robbins comes from the house.*)

MRS. ROBBINS

How do you do, Esther?

ESTHER

Very well, thank you.

*(Mrs. Robbins goes to Elijah.)*

MRS. ROBBINS

Well, Elijah?

ELIJAH

Howdy, Mother! *(She kisses him.)*

MRS. ROBBINS

Your room is ready, Professor. Do you want to postpone seeing it?

CHANTLAND *(coming back from the hill path)*

No. I'd like to get it located.

MRS. ROBBINS *(going to house door)*

If Esther will come too, we will get that all out of the way at once.

CHANTLAND

Be with you in a few minutes, Mr. Robbins. *(He takes his hand-bag and goes in followed by Esther and Mrs. Robbins.)*

IRA

Well, you've been a professor three weeks now, Elijah. How do you like it?

ELIJAH

It's been good for me—being brought to scratch. And of course I'm glad to be self-supporting—at last.

IRA

Good thing to stand in with your chief as you seem to.

ELIJAH

I suppose so, but—if we were not thinking of that—let's give ourselves a chance to treat him as human.

IRA

I've already seen his humanity.

ELIJAH

Yes? After all, he is not just bursting with it.

IRA

No? How about his daughter? Is she human?

ELIJAH

I really don't know her.

IRA

Your mother didn't seem to think she was. Did you have an interesting time walking out?

ELIJAH (*indifferently*)

Oh, yes.

(*Mrs. Robbins returns with Chantland.*)

IRA

Ready for our climb, Professor?

CHANTLAND

Ready. (*They start off up the hill.*)

IRA

We'll be back in time for dinner.

CHANTLAND

I think even sooner. (*They go up the hill talking.*)

MRS. ROBBINS

Well, how did you get along with Esther?

ELIJAH

All right,

MRS. ROBBINS

She's not a popular girl, but it's well for you to be nice to her. Her father can do a great deal for you.

ELIJAH

Mother!

MRS. ROBBINS

Well, what?

ELIJAH

What a way to be thinking of friends!

MRS. ROBBINS

If you don't look out for yourself in this world, nobody else will.

ELIJAH

I think I'll count a little on God for that. Or instinct. (*He pulls himself up.*) Hmp! (*He smiles.*)

MRS. ROBBINS

What's amusing you now?

ELIJAH

Myself. Too noble to gain by calculation, but ready to do it by instinct. That, dear mother, is the well-known Anglo-Saxon hypocrisy.

MRS. ROBBINS

You get too involved for me. How did your new psychic turn out?

ELIJAH

Like the others. Five of us sat there in the dark around a table. The replies of the spirits came from overhead. After fifteen minutes of it, I struck a match. It revealed the lady with a



megaphone pointed at the ceiling. (*Mrs. Robbins laughs.*)

(*Esther comes out. She stops on the porch, at a loss.*)

MRS. ROBBINS (*going to her*)

Is there something you want, Esther?

ESTHER

No, nothing.

MRS. ROBBINS

Something in your room?

ESTHER

The room is lovely. It makes me feel like a girl in a story-book. I shall sleep well there in the lovely quietness, shut in by the woodbine.

MRS. ROBBINS

I must see about dinner. Make Elijah entertain you. (*She goes in.*)

ESTHER (*going down from the porch*)

Please do not think you have to entertain me.

ELIJAH

I promise not to. (*He lights a cigarette.*) You are free here. Roam where you will.

ESTHER (*seeing the spring*)

Oh! (*She looks about, taking in the place, then back to the spring.*) How lovely! (*She comes to the spring, kneels by it in the position of Nam-e-qua, and gazes into it.*) That spiral of sand dances on the bottom—like an Arabian Djinn.

ELIJAH (*glancing at the spring*)

The Djinn were great terrible creatures. This

gentleman is tiny—more like an elf, I should say.

ESTHER

But he is a spiral of sand—like a desert whirlwind.

ELIJAH (*looking again he sits on the left hand rock*)

You are right. The sand-sprite's dance is mad. It is like the Djinn. You had insight to see it. Or is that the dance of an Indian dancing the story of how he killed his enemy? (*He notices that she is staring into the spring with astonishment.*) What is it? Do you see something else?

ESTHER

Why! There—there's a *face*!

ELIJAH

Your own?

ESTHER

No.

ELIJAH (*moving*)

Mine?

ESTHER

Strange—dark—a woman—an Indian woman.

ELIJAH (*he looks for it, sees nothing, looks at her*)

Is it like crystal-vision? (*She is absorbed and does not answer.*) Have you ever done crystal-gazing?

ESTHER

It's changed—smaller. There's her whole figure! Bending over—something that shines—a spring—why! As I am now!

ELIJAH

It must be yourself.

ESTHER

It's her whole figure, small, far away. She is looking down into the spring. Is *she* seeing a picture in the spring?

ELIJAH

Is it *this* spring?

ESTHER

That great tree—(*she turns to look for it in the real scene.*)

ELIJAH

Where the stump is?

ESTHER

Yes. That tree should be little. There's the ledge. That should be a thicket, and—(*she looks back in the spring.*) Why, it's gone! (*She looks up at Elijah, becomes self-conscious, looks again for the vision in the spring. She passes her hand over her eyes and forehead.*) That was strange. (*A pause.*) Why are you looking at me so queerly? You don't think—there's anything—anything "queer" about my seeing that?

ELIJAH

"Queer?" You seem to have had a crystal vision. That is not so uncommon, but—have you ever done crystal-gazing?

ESTHER

No—I—I think I'm a little dazed.

ELIJAH

I'm sorry. (*He hands her a cup of spring-water, then quickly brings cushion and steamer rug from the porch.*) Hadn't you better lie down for a moment?

ESTHER

No, No! I'm all right. But—I don't think I know what crystal-gazing is.

ELIJAH

It probably depends upon a sort of hypnosis of the eye. It is the externalization of some vision which exists somehow in the subconscious. Do you see pictures in the fire?

ESTHER

They are not like this.

ELIJAH

How does this differ?

ESTHER

This was real in itself. You can make what you see in the fire be almost what you choose.

ELIJAH

How old are you, Esther?

ESTHER

How old? That would be telling. (*She laughs.*) Oh, I don't care. I'm twenty.

ELIJAH (*musings*)

And now, for the first time—. I wonder if this vision—

ESTHER

Yes?

ELIJAH

✓ Most crystal visions are merely fanciful, but some are veridical. If yours was real—it would be important for me in an investigation—

ESTHER

But how can you tell?

ELIJAH

That's what I'm asking myself. You saw the tree which is a stump—obviously true. You saw that tree as a sapling—it looks a century old. The Indian girl you saw—this is called Name-quas's Spring. My father might know—

ESTHER

There they come! (*The voices of Ira and Chantland are heard faintly above as they come down the hill.*) Mr. Robbins, please do not speak of this before my father.

ELIJAH

No? That seems too bad. It may be of great professional interest—

ESTHER (*jumping up*)

Promise me you won't! Please promise!

ELIJAH

All right, if you insist, but I—(*pause*) Does your father cramp your life, Miss Chantland?

ESTHER

Why—I hadn't thought of it so. Do you think we ought to let ourselves think such things?

ELIJAH

I think we ought to face the truth about such things, and do what we can to correct them.

IRA (*not yet visible*)

The building burned down in 1855, and Black Hawk's skeleton was destroyed by fire.

ELIJAH

I must tell *my* father. I have to see if he can throw any light.

(*Ira and Chantland appear.*)

CHANTLAND

The most interesting spot in the state, Mr. Robbins. (*Looks at his watch.*) And I can still get in half an hour's work before dinner. (*To Esther.*) Are you sure you feel all right after the walk?

ESTHER

Oh yes.

ELIJAH

Miss Chantland does not walk like an invalid.

CHANTLAND

No, no! Of course not. But don't let Elijah stir you up too much, Esther. He's rather a flaming person at times.

ELIJAH

Good of you not say flamboyant.

CHANTLAND

That wouldn't do you justice. Well, I must get to work.

(*He goes in. Elijah waits till he is out of hearing, then goes to Ira and speaks rather low.*)

ELIJAH

A singular thing has happened, Dad. Miss Chantland just saw a picture in the spring—of

the nature of crystal-vision. It seemed to be this spot as it was long ago. That stump was a tree, that tree a sapling. She saw an Indian girl bending over this spring, and felt that the girl then, as she herself now, was seeing a vision in it.

IRA

Really! (*He stares at Esther.*) Guess you must know quite a bit about our Indians.

ESTHER

Very little.

IRA (*pondering*)

I don't see how you could know *that*.

ELIJAH

Know what?

IRA

About Nam-e-qua. What you say you saw, Miss Chantland, is something that is supposed to have happened here. My grandfather used to tell me that the day he shot at Black Hawk Nam-e-qua looked in this spring and saw a warning picture. The Indians said she saw it in the spring before it happened. I suppose the story was made up afterwards. But—(*he looks at the spring, then at Esther. Then, smiling*) Looks as though she had sort o' trained this spring.

ELIJAH

The reproduction of an actual moment! (*Going enthusiastically to Esther*) I want you to do experimental work with me, Miss Chantland.

IRA

It's the most astonishing thing I ever heard of.

ELIJAH

It is rare, but there are recorded cases of both kinds of vision—Miss Chantland's revealing the past,—Nam-e-qua's the future. But there have not been more than five or six sensitives whose visions equal this. (*To her*) I can't tell you how important it is.

MRS. ROBBINS

Oh Ira!

IRA

Yes?

MRS. ROBBINS

Can you help me a minute?

IRA (*starting in*)

Your father will be a good deal surprised—

ESTHER (*interrupting and speaking low*)

Mr. Robbins, will you please not tell him anything about it?

IRA

Why—uh—Isn't that too bad? Should think it would interest him—

ESTHER

It would upset him. He would think it queer.

IRA

Well, it *is* queer.

ESTHER (*coaxing, taking his arm*)

I'll do something nice for you sometime. (*It is in this instant that "his mind is hers."*)



IRA (*breaking her spell*)

All right, young woman, all right! (*He starts in. Stopping on the porch he turns to Elijah and smiles.*) She's human enough. (*He goes in.*)

ESTHER

He's a dear! But—(*reproachfully*) Did you tell him I wasn't human?

ELIJAH

I told him I didn't know you well enough to say. And now—I'm hoping to know you very much better, and—(*shifting from the defensive*) how do you know your father would think it queer if this is your first crystal vision?

ESTHER

I never saw a *picture* before.

ELIJAH

But there was something else he thought queer—and didn't like?

ESTHER

He didn't like my writing.

ELIJAH

Automatic writing?

ESTHER

Yes. I wasn't going to tell you. I suppose that wasn't honest, but—I wanted you to like me. I am tired of not being liked.

ELIJAH

I do like you. I don't dislike people for being different. What is more—I am wondering whether you are not possessed of powers—as

rare, perhaps, as the gift of a great poet, or artist, or philosopher.

ESTHER

Wouldn't that be thinking as much too much of my queerness as my father thinks too little? But do you really think it has some value?

ELIJAH

I think just what I say. I think the appearance of this faculty in you and others is the beginning of a new unfolding of the human soul. How did you do it—the writing?

ESTHER

I didn't do it. My hand did it. Or—(*watching him*) *something* did it through my hand—something not me.

ELIJAH

Something in the unconscious part of your mind. (*He watches her reaction.*) At least that is my belief. I do not believe in discarnate spirits. Tell me how you wrote.

ESTHER

As fast as the pencil could race—a string of letters not divided off into words. They came backwards—the letters. The words came in the right order, but each one was spelled backward. That was so I wouldn't spoil the message by trying to guess it.

ELIJAH

Was this in a trance?

ESTHER

No. I could talk about something else while my

hand wrote.

ELIJAH (*offering her pencil and some backs of letters*)

Will you try to do some of that writing for me now?

ESTHER (*recoiling*)

Oh, no! I mustn't . . . I wouldn't dare . . . I am under . . . I am forbidden to do it.

ELIJAH

Forbidden? (*After a moment*) I wonder if you wouldn't do it anyhow, if you understood my purpose?

ESTHER

I—I want to understand it.

ELIJAH (*seating himself at the left of the spring*)

I see a gorgeous life-work, Miss Chantland—if I can find a good psychic sensitive. I've been looking for one for two years. She must be young—not molded in advance by the prevalent ideas of the mediums. You see, the investigators of psychic facts have nearly all been interested in proving that the human soul survives death. They haven't proved it, but they have inadvertently turned up some other things. For instance, some sort of underground or wireless connection between minds. In trance the sensitive often shows ability to draw upon any desired knowledge, any relevant fact, which exists anywhere in any mind. Does each soul connect with every other? Am I in some way one with every man? If we find this true it will transform our con-

ception of what mind is—of what a human being is. We may not be the disconnected islands we supposed. The islands join beneath the sea!

ESTHER

But if the psychics have proved this—why isn't everyone excited about it?

ELIJAH

There has been no one to excite them. I take that to be my job. The men who know the facts play down telepathy and the oneness of us all in the interests of their rival theory.

ESTHER

What theory?

ELIJAH

That supernormally acquired knowledge comes from the minds of the dead.

ESTHER

While you think it comes from other living minds.

ELIJAH

Exactly.

ESTHER

Why do you not write a book on your own theory?

ELIJAH

I will—if you will help me.

ESTHER

I?

ELIJAH

Yes. But see what it can lead to. If we felt this hidden oneness of all men—could there be

war? A keen new sense of the identity of human beings—that is the heart of a great new living religion. Spiritual communism! Communism of material wealth might spring from that spontaneously. The identity of human beings! Why, that is the fulfillment of the immemorial dream of love—to be one with the beloved. (*For a moment the silence is broken only by the sound of the spring.*) Who has not sought for that? Who has not sought it in vain? No one knows how. We may learn it—from you.

ESTHER

Do you need me? It seems to me you have it all already in yourself.

ELIJAH

No. I merely see what the psychic power may do. The power itself is what you have—I think you have. It may be all there in you inarticulate. You are a signal glimmering out of night.

ESTHER

If I could only feel that you are not being carried away!

ELIJAH

I'll give you an idea wilder still. A conscious mind like mine directing unconscious powers—powers like yours—two such as we might grow to be one person—one person in two minds—gifted as no one mind has been gifted—a new kind of genius—the end of loneliness!

ESTHER

Can there ever be such beauty in the world?

ELIJAH

The beauty in the world is infinite. You are a new kind of channel of inflowing beauty. There'll be fulfillment of hopes more flaming high than the highest we can form. Maybe the gods were only man's prophetic dream of what man is to be.

ESTHER

But that is so far—so far away.

ELIJAH

Yes. I shouldn't let myself be caught by that old ecstasy. What I ought to do is to make you feel—the next little step.

ESTHER

Yes. The step you think I can take. Tell me of that.

ELIJAH

I want a new sensitive—yourself—to approach the whole thing from a new angle. I want a new body of experiments in which the profound dramatic imagination of the unconscious shall not be enlisted in advance in the service of the spiritualist doctrine. I want the subconscious to reveal its own sources of knowledge. Instead of suggesting to *your* unconscious: "Reveal the spirits of the dead" I want your writing to be born of the suggestion: "Reveal yourself!"

ESTHER

That moves something—deep—in me. Something in me believes that what you have said—is what I was born to do!

ELIJAH (*rising*)

If you feel that—! (*He takes her hands.*)  
Esther! Do you know what this means? It means that you and I, before we die, may turn the thought of the world as sharply as Darwin did—but inward. There is a voyage greater than that of Columbus—for what we seek is—the unknown hemisphere of the soul! You and I are going to set sail into ourselves; for there, in the ocean of the unconscious, is the shore of our new world!

ESTHER

A door to infinite beauty—and they have made me feel—(*her voice breaks toward tears but she controls herself.*) Listen! Because of these messages done by my hand, and things like that, they have made me feel that I was queer and different. My family have been ashamed of it—as though it were some disease—to be concealed—to be cured. My father and mother and sisters have all tried to train me out of it.

ELIJAH

Your father! A psychologist!

ESTHER (*almost crying*)

Oh, Mr. Robbins, you don't know what it means to me to have someone see a power for good in my peculiarities. On account of them I have been avoided—unpopular—a wall-flower. I have been watched as though I were in danger of—going mad. Even now I have to see Dr. Hadley every week. And now suddenly to have you

tell me that the queer things in me may have such value to you—to the world—oh, if you only knew how it reconciles me to myself—how it makes me feel—Oh, thanks, thanks! (*She kisses his hand hysterically. Then, shocked by her action, she turns and goes swiftly away from him.*)

ELIJAH

My dear Miss Chantland—Esther—my dear girl—I—of course I do not deserve—

ESTHER (*not looking at him*)

Forgive me. I—I didn't mean to—but I am so grateful it hurts. I'm sorry to embarrass you. I *had* to, I *had* to! I would do anything. What can I do to show you—? (*She turns to him.*) You asked me to write for you. Give me that pencil and paper! (*He gives them. Her hand is racing as*

*The Curtains Close.*

SCENE II.

(*The scene is unchanged. Esther is still writing, rapidly, automatically. The pencil stops.*)

ESTHER

That seems to be all.

(*Elijah takes the lead pencil manuscript. He pores over it without result.*)

You have to divide off the words and reverse the order of the letters. Shall I do it? (*She takes the Ms. intending to transpose on another sheet, but after trying half a line she stops, puzzled.*) It doesn't make sense.



ELIJAH

Let me try it. (*He works at it with pencil a moment, shakes his head.*) It's just as unintelligible backward as it is forward.

ESTHER

That is strange.

ELIJAH (*after trying it again*)

No. It is just a meaningless string of syllables. (*He sighs.*) Did this ever happen when you were in the habit of writing?

ESTHER (*scanning the paper*)

It never happened. Either I didn't write or I wrote *something*. Here! Did you see this? Here is your name—Elijah—not backward. (*They bend over the paper. At the same instant they both point and together read aloud the name*) Nam-e-qua!

ELIJAH (*in unison with Esther*)

Nam-e-qua! But if the names are not backward—let's not reverse. What's this? Ma-ka-tai-me-she-kia-kiak. That's familiar. Why, that's the Indian name of Black Hawk. Is this whole thing in Sauk? Do you know the language?

ESTHER

No.

ELIJAH

Then it isn't likely—have you ever written in a language you didn't know?

ESTHER

No.

ELIJAH

Let's see if Dad can read it. (*He takes it and starts toward the house.*) Dad! Oh, Dad!

IRA (*from within in the voice of one absorbed in reading.*)

Hello? What is it?

ELIJAH

Dad, can you come out here a minute? (*He bounds up the porch.*) Come out here quick!

IRA (*appearing*)

What's the excitement?

ELIJAH

See if you can read this. (*Ira takes the paper.*)

IRA

It's all run together. What is it?

ELIJAH

That's what we want to know.

IRA (*with pleased recognition*)

Oh. Is it Sauk? Where did you get it? What is it?

ELIJAH

If it's Sauk, read it. Translate it.

IRA (*scanning it*)

There are some words I don't— It's hard to— Just let me get my manuscript vocabulary. (*He turns to go in.*)

ELIJAH

Not now. Don't stop for that. Give us the gist of it. Come on over here. (*He leads him over to Esther. Ira sits to the left of the Spring and haltingly, aloud, translates.*)

IRA (*translating*)

"Son of my son Elijah! Through the girl who is like Nam-e-qua. You think Black Hawk does not live. I do what I can . . . my peace-pipe words. Your father knows. 'As my smoke and your smoke become one smoke, so shall your spirit and mine be one'."

What in the world is this? Where did you get it?

ELIJAH

Do you know the words?

IRA

This is what Black Hawk said when he forgave Elijah First for trying to kill him.

ELIJAH

This is wonderful, Esther.

ESTHER

I must write again.

IRA

Did *she* write this?

ELIJAH

S-sh!

ESTHER (*her hand meanwhile racing*)

You don't need to keep still. My hand won't hear you. It doesn't hear me, either.

ELIJAH

So that's the way it is.

IRA

But if you wrote this, then you know the Sauk language better than I do.

ESTHER

Not a word of it.

IRA

Then how—you're a little too much for me, young woman. I'm beginning to get the creeps.

ESTHER (*she transfers the moving pencil to to another sheet, Elijah taking the first*)

Is it the same—in the Indian words?

ELIJAH

I think so. (*He passes it to Ira.*)

IRA (*reading it through to himself while Esther goes on writing, then aloud*)

"You have a battle to fight. You must not yield. (*Chantland appears on the porch. He stops and looks intently. The three are too absorbed to notice him.*)

"You will need your utmost skill. May your heart—(*Ira here reaches the bottom of the page. He and Elijah watch Esther while the pencil finishes on the new page. It stops. She hands it to him. He places the two sheets together then reads*) "May your heart be unconquered by pain, and you be proved a true brave."

CHANTLAND (*severely*)

Esther!

(*She gives a low hysterical scream, and clasps her hands on her heart.*)

Is that automatic writing? (*He comes and looks over Ira's shoulder.*) It looks very much like it. (*He takes it from Ira.*) Yes, that same old scrawl. (*He turns to her with intense dis-*

*approval.*) Why have you done this? (*Pause*)  
After all we have been through—

ELIJAH

I persuaded her to do it. I am interested in automatic writing. And what do you think, Dr. Chantland? This writing is in the Sauk language. It places your daughter among the greatest psychic sensitives.

CHANTLAND

Esther, I'm surprised at you. After all we have tried to do—to break up this—! I want to talk to you later. At present I have to explain a few things to Elijah Robbins. Will you please go to your room?

ESTHER

If you are going to talk to Mr. Robbins about me, I think, if you don't mind, I'd rather stay and hear what is said.

CHANTLAND

Go to your room.  
(*Esther turns to go.*)

ELIJAH

Dr. Chantland, it seems to me her desire to hear what you say is reasonable. It ought to be complied with. She is not a child.

CHANTLAND (*angrily*)

If she wants to hear me tell you—

IRA (*interrupting*)

Now, now, gentlemen! Isn't it possible to iron out this difference without anybody getting angry? There is no reason why I should hear

this, so I'll go in. I'll let you know when dinner is ready; and hope by that time you'll get this straightened out to everybody's satisfaction, and all come in happy. (*He goes in.*)

ESTHER

I have already told Mr. Robbins about my having to see Dr. Hadley.

CHANTLAND

Why did you tell that?

ESTHER

Well—

CHANTLAND

Let all this be in strict confidence, will you Robbins? The less talk there is about her abnormal tendency— I don't want people's tongues to start wagging over this relapse. (*He shakes the paper.*)

ELIJAH

Relapse? Do you know anything about automatic writing, Dr. Chantland? It's not a disease.

CHANTLAND

I know a great deal more about it than I want to.

ELIJAH

Do you know that in twenty-four out of twenty-five cases it is done by people with no nervous derangement?

CHANTLAND

No, I *don't* know that,—and Dr. Hadley doesn't know it either.

ELIJAH

No. I talked with him at the club. He has read only cases involving disintegration of personality. He has no means of recognizing healthy subconscious activity of this kind when he sees it.

CHANTLAND

Do you set yourself up as an authority on insanity superior to Dr. Hadley?

ELIJAH

On insanity, no. On automatic writing, yes. He knows nothing about it.

CHANTLAND

And doesn't want to.

ELIJAH

His desire for ignorance is no credit to him. If Miss Chantland's "abnormality" consists merely in her ability to do automatic writing, why have her observed by a man who knows nothing about it?

CHANTLAND

He observes a good deal—that you know nothing about—in her general neuresthenic condition.

ELIJAH

If she has any hysterical tendency, it is accounted for by the fact that she is being watched, suspected, talked about and sent to an alienist. All she needs is to be loved, trusted, accepted for what she is, and rightly admired for it. The

faculties which produced that document need to be given play—and work.

CHANTLAND

Work?

ESTHER

I believe that is so, father. Of course I do not know about it scientifically like Mr. Robbins, but I do feel that it is so.

CHANTLAND

Do you think I haven't loved you because I have watched and guarded you?

ESTHER

I know you have done it for the best, but isn't it possible that you have been mistaken? If only I could write when—it wants to; and people wouldn't think it so—It's being thought queer that has made me queer, I'm sure.

CHANTLAND

I don't thank you, Robbins, for making her feel that this does her no harm.

ELIJAH

It is a gift akin to genius.

CHANTLAND

And to madness.

ELIJAH

She happens to be sane. What is more—she happens to be one of the vanguard in a new advance of the powers of the human soul.

CHANTLAND

This writing is certainly beyond the control of her conscious will. Automatic writing, on the



face of it, means a split personality; and however interesting that may be for the study of abnormal psychology, it is not a thing one has in one's family if one can help it.

ELIJAH

One's personality is "split" by sleep into waking-self and dream-self. Carry out your principle, and you won't let Esther sleep.

CHANTLAND

What, just for curiosity is your explanation of this document?

ELIJAH (*taking it*)

I do not understand it. That is why I want to study it.

CHANTLAND

In Esther? I thought you had a bit of an axe of your own to grind. I want to tell you, Robbins, that I have never been willing to use my daughter as laboratory material, and I don't propose to have you do it.

ELIJAH

In or out of my laboratory—using her faculties will give her health which she cannot have while you repress them.

CHANTLAND

Do you know, Robbins, that you are going to get yourself regarded in the academic world as a fantastic enthusiast?

ELIJAH

Because I know the difference between abnormality and supernormality?

CHANTLAND

Because of your quasi-religious exaltation over matters which have to be dealt with scientifically. I didn't know when I had you appointed that your chief interest in psychology lay in this dubious by-path, full of fraud.

ELIJAH

There's a lot of fraud—some of which I have exposed. Gold bricks do not disprove the existence of gold. This is gold. Have you taken in the facts, Dr. Chantland? This is in the Sauk language—in the form of a message to me from Black Hawk. It contains a sentence actually spoken by him in his life-time—given here as proof of his identity.

CHANTLAND

Do you actually believe in—believe that—

ELIJAH

I do not believe it is from Black Hawk. I believe that in the subconscious mind of Miss Chantland, as in other psychics, there exists a dramatist who in this message created this character—Black Hawk's spirit. To get the material for this her mind must have gone into the mind of my father, absorbing in a flash his knowledge of Black Hawk. It is as though for an instant his mind *was* hers. She is able to know what he knows because she has the power of being him. She works at a depth of her own mind which is also—the depth of his. It suggests a level in us all where all our minds are

one. It is as though her spirit and his were two wells going down into the same stratum. The water of her deep subconsciousness must have the power to rise in him and be for a moment the water of that well.

CHANTLAND

Do you seriously advance this incredible explanation?

ELIJAH

How else but in some such way could she have a knowledge of this language?

CHANTLAND

Hmp!

ELIJAH

How do you explain it?

CHANTLAND

I don't.

ELIJAH

I, at least, have ideas which may lead to explanation.

ESTHER

I think the message comes—as it says it does—from Black Hawk.

CHANTLAND (*aghast*)

You do?

ELIJAH (*perturbed*)

I didn't know you thought that!

CHANTLAND

Well! What do you say of the sanity of that opinion?

ELIJAH

It is disappointing to me—. It hurts—a hope—. But—sane? That opinion is held by investigators as sane as Frederick Myers.

CHANTLAND

A fine authority.

ELIJAH

Unimpeachable in statements of fact. I believe Miss Chantland shares her opinion also with William James.

ESTHER

Of course, I do not know anything about it. I have not studied it at all. I do have an awfully strong *feeling* that the message came from Black Hawk.

ELIJAH

I want a chance to talk with you about that feeling Miss Chantland. I must try to change it—for the sake of our work.

CHANTLAND

You might as well put it out of your head, Robbins, that you are going to carry on any psychic “work” with Esther. You are not going to do it.

ELIJAH

It is so important to me that I will have to try to persuade you, upon full reflection, not to hold to that.

CHANTLAND

Save yourself—and me—the trouble.  
(*Elijah, downcast, turns and walks head down,*

*hands clasped behind him, thinking. Chantland looks after him critically, then at Esther.)*

Esther!

ESTHER

Yes?

CHANTLAND

I want you to promise me that you will not do any more writing, or other experiments with Robbins.

ELIJAH

*(Elijah stops abruptly, whirls, looking at Esther to see what she is going to do, then just before she speaks)*

Don't do it Esther!

CHANTLAND

I thought so. Do you see what was in his mind, Esther? He was going to ask you secretly to work with him, without my permission, against my will. Is that in your mind, too? If not, give me your promise.

ESTHER

This is awfully hard. I hate to refuse to promise, Father, and yet I do think Mr. Robbins is right about my being all right. I do think it would be better for me to work with him, and do as much writing as comes naturally—

CHANTLAND

Esther, you are forcing me to use my full authority.

ELIJAH *(quietly)*

I hope you won't exceed it.

CHANTLAND (*with cold control of anger*)

I think at present a warning ought to be sufficient. I hope, Robbins, that you will forgive me for putting it so plainly as to make misunderstanding impossible. If there is any more writing or any other psychic experiment, it will have to mean the severance of both your professional relations with me and your personal relations with Esther. Is that clear?

ELIJAH (*considers it, then with deep conviction*)

That is pretty damned hard!

(*Ira comes from the house to the front of the porch.*)

IRA (*with rising inflection*)

Dinner's about ready. Won't you all come in?  
(*Mrs. Robbins appears in the porch behind Ira.*)

CHANTLAND

Yes. Certainly. (*To Ira*) I want to find out about the evening trains. It will be necessary to get Esther back home soon after dinner.

IRA

Tonight?

ESTHER

Oh, no, Father! That would be too—

MRS. ROBBINS

Why, Elijah, you said you were all going to stay till Monday morning. I have everything all planned. (*She comes down from the porch.*)  
Is anything wrong?

CHANTLAND

I'm sorry to say—

IRA

Oh, they've had a bit of a disagreement; but the best thing is to go ahead without changing any plans, and everybody sleep on it here tonight, and it will all look a whole lot better in the morning.

MRS. ROBBINS

Oh, why yes, Professor Chantland! I would feel dreadfully if you went back home tonight after—

ESTHER

Of course, Father.

CHANTLAND

Yes, I see. Of course we'll stay tonight. Some-time tomorrow—

IRA

By tomorrow perhaps you'll find no reason for going. It will be all right by then, I'm sure. I may be able to help a little by having a talk with Elijah.

ELIJAH (*starting across*)

Let's go in to dinner.

MRS. ROBBINS

That boy! (*Taking Chantland's arm.*) Come, Professor Chantland. (*She leads him into the house.*) Do forgive him this time, and we'll— (*Ira follows promptly after Chantland and Mrs. Robbins*) I don't know where he gets his queer ideas—certainly not from me.

ESTHER

I'm so sorry!

ELIJAH (*on the porch speaking low*)

I must see you alone after dinner.

(*She sighs, then turns and goes in without answering. Elijah follows as*

*The Curtains Close*

SCENE III.

(*The same spot late in the evening. The strip of sky is deep night-blue. Two or three needles of moonlight slant down through the oak boughs. One strikes the spring and is reflected trembling on the face of whomsoever sits behind it. The electric porch-light lights the scene until Ira's exit. When Esther reaches the spring her face is seen only by the light reflected from the water. (Elijah in checkered shadow near the spring is invisible as long as he is motionless. His mother comes from the house to the lighted porch.)*

MRS. ROBBINS

Elijah! (*Silence.*) Elijah!

ELIJAH (*rising to his elbow.*)

Yes, Mother?

MRS. ROBBINS (*crossing to him, and speaking low*)

You must stop irritating Professor Chantland.

ELIJAH

That's difficult.

MRS. ROBBINS

What was the sense of making that scene before she went to bed? It did you no good.

ELIJAH

I'm going to see her.



MRS. ROBBINS

When? It's perfectly mad! You can't see her. And I don't see why you want to. Queer as she is, and now with her father—

ELIJAH

He is incredible.

MRS. ROBBINS

It's too bad you feel so superior to him, Elijah. A man of his position—the head of your department—it would be a more hopeful sign if you showed a little willingness to be guided by him in your work. You are going to lose your instructorship if you keep on.

ELIJAH

Mother, I'll agree to put nothing Chantland objects to into lectures or teaching. I'll do that part of it like a machine. Does that satisfy you?

MRS. ROBBINS

Why—If you will also agree not to try to see Esther.

ELIJAH (*rising*)

*That* conflicts with the freedom I must hold to in my own study. In that she is essential.

MRS. ROBBINS (*turning to go*)

Your father wants to talk to you before you go to bed.

ELIJAH

All right, I'll talk with him. (*Mrs. Robbins goes in.*)

(*Elijah stands silent looking towards the upstairs window from his place by the spring.*)

*(Ira comes from the house)*

ELIJAH

Looking for me, Dad?

IRA

Yes. *(He comes over to Elijah.)* I've had a talk with Chantland.

ELIJAH

Well?

IRA

He's a firm man.

ELIJAH

Stubborn! Stubborn and stupid!

IRA

I don't think it's unreasonable, if you'll put yourself in his place. It isn't your daughter whose health—whose reason perhaps—you're ready to risk—

ELIJAH

There is no risk—or if there is—a little—This life of ours has value only so long as we are ready to throw it away for a great end. The beauty and wonder of what I can do with that girl is too great—for *her* to miss. Of all these billion human bubbles formed by the great Breath—One might as well burst with a will on God's champagne!

IRA

Maybe you have to be like that in order, as Black Hawk says, to prove yourself a true brave. But you can't expect her father to let you risk—her.

ELIJAH

She is the one to judge that. I want to find out what she feels. Her father tries to prevent even that. He is not going to succeed.

IRA

He's a firm man.

ELIJAH

Dad, the revelation of that girl I had today—I'd stake my life on the chance of achieving what I see as possible with her. It could be done without harm to us, with glory, if Chantland would keep hands off. Her gift is as rare as that of a great poet. I can't tell you how beautiful her mind is—intricate and lovely and delicate webs running in and in to some profound center at the heart of the world. Do you think I would deal with a mind like that so as to hurt it? Do you think I would sacrifice it to any Moloch of cold-blooded scientific investigation? That seems to be Chantland's picture of it. He needn't judge me by himself. Today, when I was telling her that her unusual faculties have value—instead of being something to be ashamed of—she suddenly revealed—in her gratitude for a little rational appreciation—an amazing, loving humility—it completely got me, Dad! I *have* to do it for her—I *have* to.

IRA

I'm afraid you can't make Chantland see it.

ELIJAH

Then I have to do it without his seeing it!

IRA

You can't. She has promised him not to see you again. It means the loss of your university position. Your mother thinks I ought to warn you not to hope to fall back on me. Your brothers would not think it fair. Your mother thinks it best for you to understand that you have to make good in the university.

ELIJAH

I'm sorry you feel that way. The work I could do with this girl—it's worth supporting, Dad.

IRA

It looks pretty wild to me—cutting loose from your assured income in the University. What's the matter, Elijah? Don't you want me here?

ELIJAH

I don't, Dad, just now. I need to concentrate by myself. We can talk just as well tomorrow, can't we, and—

IRA

Why, yes—I can go in now. (*He rises to go*)  
You aren't going to try to send thought messages, are you?

ELIJAH

Not exactly that.

IRA (*shaking his head*)

I suppose I have no business to interfere, but you know what I think.

ELIJAH

I wish Chantland was like you.

IRA

Maybe it would be better if I was like him.

ELIJAH

There'd be no beauty in the world if men like you were like him. You are the salt of the earth!

IRA (*too moved to speak Ira turns towards the house. He goes to the porchlight, starts to turn it out but does not. Controlling the emotion in his voice*)

Turn out the porchlight when you come in, Elijah. (*He goes into the house.*)

(*After a moment the light in the lower window goes out. After looking at the house a moment, Elijah goes over quietly, turns out the porchlight, and returns to his place by the spring. There he stands doing his mesmeric invocation—silhouetted against the moonlit sky. He lifts his arms as though drawing in the Spirit of the World. He looks toward the house but in vain. He gives it up, and sits by the spring dejected, absorbed in bitter thought. Esther comes out on the porch silently, opening and closing the screen door without a sound. She wears noiseless bed slippers. Her eyes are closed. She walks as one not seeing, yet without uncertainty. Elijah does not see or hear her as she stands on the porch. There is the sound inside the house of someone running into a chair in the dark. Elijah turns with a start to look. Esther instantly glides*

*down from the porch and stands behind the oak tree.)*

ELIJAH (*as he sees her start from the porch*)

*There! (He makes a movement to rise and go to her, but checks it as the screen door opens and Chantland comes out on the porch. Chantland turns on the porch light and peers about. He sees the figure by the spring.)*

CHANTLAND

Who is there? Is that Elijah?

ELIJAH

Yes.

CHANTLAND (*taking one step down*)

Are you alone?

ELIJAH

Yes.

CHANTLAND Oh. (*Rebuffed, he turns back, gives another look around, appears satisfied. He puts his hand on the porch light switch*)

Well; goodnight to you.

ELIJAH

Goodnight.

*(Like a sharp answer Chantland snaps off the light, goes in and upstairs. Neither Esther nor Elijah move till he is well gone. Esther listens as he withdraws. Then she comes from behind the tree and comes slowly toward Elijah at the spring. She advances with hand out feeling for him. He takes her hands tenderly.)*

ESTHER (*a low cry of happiness and triumph*)  
Elijah!

ELIJAH  
Hush! (*He looks apprehensively at the house.*)  
Listen! (*It is silent. They still cling to each other's hands.*)

ESTHER  
You willed me to come.

ELIJAH  
With all my will.

ESTHER  
I am here.

ELIJAH  
Your eyes are closed. (*Pause.*) Are you asleep?

ESTHER  
That in me which was afraid sleeps.

ELIJAH  
Are *you* not afraid?

ESTHER  
No. I am not afraid—even of death—with you.

ELIJAH  
It is wonderful! I hoped, but did not really think I could bring you. I thought you might not come even if you felt the message.

ESTHER  
I felt you saying “come”; I could only come in sleep. I slept.

ELIJAH  
Were you not asleep when you felt me saying “come”!

ESTHER

No. I went to sleep so I could come. It is not just like sleep. It is steadier. It will not change like dream, but keep on the same.

ELIJAH

I had given it up when you came.

ESTHER

That was when I was on the porch. I did not know what to do.

ELIJAH

Do you remember seeing the vision in the spring?

ESTHER

Yes, I remember. The spring is there. (*Points.*)

ELIJAH

Do you hear it?

ESTHER

Yes. I feel where it is.

ELIJAH

Do you remember the message from Black Hawk?

ESTHER

My hand wrote it.

ELIJAH

Do you know the words? Can you repeat the Indian words?

ESTHER

No. It was Black Hawk who wrote the words.

ESTHER

Black Hawk did not know how to write.



ESTHER

It came from that in me which is Black Hawk.

ELIJAH

That sounds like truth. But you are not Black Hawk *now*?

ESTHER

I would have to sleep more deeply.

ELIJAH (*gently*)

Sleep more deeply.

ESTHER

Must I?

ELIJAH

Yes.

ESTHER

I love it as it is.

ELIJAH

You shall come back to this. But now—sleep more deeply.

ESTHER (*her voice more drowsy, she sinks slowly down, he helping, into the place of visions by the spring*)

So-I-can-be—Black-Hawk?

ELIJAH

Yes.

ESTHER

I think I will go back and be Nam-e-quā.

ELIJAH (*sinking dreamily beside her*)

And I will be Elijah First.

ESTHER

And we will be lovers.

ELIJAH

And live in the lodge of Black Hawk.

ESTHER

A father who did not distrust the voice of the spirit and call it mad. (*Pause.*) Listen. (*Pause.*) He spoke. Did you hear?

ELIJAH

It is only you who can hear that.

ESTHER

Listen. (*Pause.*) Did you hear?

ELIJAH

No.

ESTHER

It is to you he speaks. You must hear.

VOICE

Son of Elijah.

ELIJAH

I heard *that*.

VOICE

I want you to hear my voice.

ELIJAH

I hear it. Are you Black Hawk?

VOICE

I am that part of the Great Spirit which remembers Black Hawk.

ELIJAH

With what voice do you speak?

VOICE

My voice which Man-i-to in you remembers.

ELIJAH

How can memory make sound?

VOICE

In the soul.

ELIJAH

Does Man-i-to exist, but not you?

VOICE

I am troubled. Farewell.

ELIJAH

Can you still hear me?

ESTHER

What He remembers is.

ELIJAH

Did *you* say that—or he?

ESTHER

It is what he thought.

ELIJAH

How could I hear that voice?

ESTHER

Being one with me.

ELIJAH

I could not hear it—except—as with the Yogis  
—I am hypnotized by you.

ESTHER

But so you hear the voice.

ELIJAH

I know no case of a hypnotist being entranced  
by his subject.

ESTHER

They do not love enough. You share the trance.

ELIJAH

Do I love you?

ESTHER

Yes.

ELIJAH (*with mystical recognition of the fact*)

Why, you are like the depth of my own mind!  
You speak the truth that is in me hidden from  
myself. Where my mind ends and yours be-  
gins there is no dividing line. I do love you.  
I love you so much I feel—that I am you.

ESTHER

I am you, and you are me.

ELIJAH (*they draw together and are silent*)

Is this a new thing in the world?

ESTHER

Like the people of ten thousand years from now.

VOICE

Like the red people who were here.

ELIJAH (*not moving*)

What voice is that? (*After speaking he draws  
a little from Esther to listen.*)

VOICE

My people knew the way within—the Way to  
me. You drove them away. You made the land  
ugly. You never saw its ancient soul. My peo-  
ple knew the Way; and you have lost it. Your  
people hear no voice within. Those like you  
who hear my voice—they call you mad.

ELIJAH (*he rouses himself as from a spell. He  
makes a gesture as of tearing some thick cover-  
ing from his ears*)

That is *not* the God of Black Hawk! Those are my own thoughts—or my father's—the way we treated the Indians—more psychic than we—what we could have learned from them—those are my own thoughts.

ESTHER

They were not yours once. They came to you—from where?

ELIJAH

Esther, you are too much like the other sensitives. That voice comes from your will—disguising itself as the Man-i-to. It is you, not I, who are guiding. That dramatist in you is using the power of your deep-dreaming mind—to deceive me—to deceive yourself. So you and I shall discover no new hemisphere. (*He takes two or three steps away from her; turns; returns.*) Do we have to believe that in the deep center of every human soul sits this deceitful dramaturge—there like a spider spinning—the False?

ESTHER

The false which by spinning he makes be true.

ELIJAH

No. The false is not true. It cannot be made true.

ESTHER

But yes! We were not, but the desire of the soul—it lied us into existence.

ELIJAH

It willed us into existence because we are true.

Like all the others you are trying to reveal spirits external to yourself. Won't you, can't you, reveal your own? Can't you dramatize the Truth?

ESTHER

It must be in persons—in spirits.

ELIJAH

Let it be your own—not Black Hawk's. From the depths of the mind you exist in—do not trifle with Black Hawk and his God, but look into yourself.

ESTHER

The eye does not see itself.

ELIJAH

Then find a mirror there in those depths of the mind which are like the depths of the sea—and *open to you.*

ESTHER

The spirits are the mirror—if you know how to look.

ELIJAH

Esther—dreamer—why is the trance self in you the same as in the others—and why do you all take so much trouble to prove that the spirits of the dead exist?

ESTHER (*with quiet conviction*)

Because they do.

ELIJAH

Well—even so—even if they do—I still ask this: Why do you take no interest in the hidden nature of the living spirit—your own?

*(The screen door opens quietly, and closes, Chantland remaining invisible in the darkness.)*

ESTHER

I am too tired. Something you do not know troubles me.

ELIJAH *(looking at her, then taking her hand)*

Next time you will tell me how you knew how to write Indian words, but now—do not wake up wholly, but sleep less deeply. Come back to where you were when you said you loved it.

*(Chantland switches on the porch light. Elijah turns with a start and sees him. Esther does not open her eyes. She is intent on Chantland's presence, but is not afraid.)*

CHANTLAND

Robbins! Do you think I didn't mean what I said? Your connection with my department terminates now. This is the last time you see Esther. Esther, you have broken your promise. *(He sees that her eyes are closed.)* What is this? Hypnosis? *(Angrily)* Esther! Wake up! *(Without waking she turns quietly away from him.)*

ELIJAH

Stop it, Chantland! Esther, you are not to be frightened. What do you think you're dealing with rough-shod? Go back into the house and let me deal with this.

CHANTLAND

I'll not leave her another instant here like this with you.

ELIJAH

Keep out of this I tell you—or I can't be responsible—

CHANTLAND

You're not responsible—you're mad!

ELIJAH

Do let me send her back to her room as she is, and have her wake up there!

ESTHER (*opening her eyes; voice reproachful*)

You said "Wake up!"

CHANTLAND

It's time you did wake up.

(*Esther looks at him and screams with fear.*)

My God, Robbins!

ELIJAH (*he springs to her side and tries to take her hands*)

Esther! Be quiet!

(*She is afraid of him too, and cowers away from him hysterically.*)

ESTHER

Father! Don't look at me so! What has happened? How did we get here?

ELIJAH

You walked here in your sleep. It's nothing. Don't be afraid. Go back to sleep as you did before.

ESTHER

I *am* afraid!

ELIJAH

You won't be when you go back—you were not afraid then. (*Soothingly*) Go back into the



sleep you love—the sleep that is steadier than sleep.

CHANTLAND

Are you hypnotizing her *again*?

ELIJAH

For God's sake, Chantland, go in the house.

CHANTLAND

I'll not do it. (*Esther who has started to quiet, stares at him in terror, her breast heaving with excitement.*)

ELIJAH

I beg you—give me a chance to get her over this shock. You'll be all right in two minutes, Esther.

CHANTLAND

She is going home with me on the midnight train.

ELIJAH

She'll do nothing of the kind. She is in no condition to leave.

CHANTLAND

You can't be trusted in the same place with her. Esther, go to your room and get ready to leave this place at once.

ELIJAH

You're utterly mad. I tell you to relax the grip of your fingers on her throat.

CHANTLAND

You talk like that—you who subject her to hypnosis!

ELIJAH

Stop it! Stop it! Do you want to destroy her?

Let me get her quieted and back into her room.

CHANTLAND

What right have you—?

ELIJAH

I *can* do it. For God's sake let me. Give me a chance. Can't you see I can do it?

CHANTLAND

You've done her all the harm you're going to. Leave me alone with her.

ELIJAH (*squaring to strike*)

Look here, Chantland. I'm done with you now. You go into that house!

(*Elijah's next argument will be that of physical force, but at the sight of his attitude Esther goes into hysterics and falls unconscious.*)

You've done it, you fool! (*He springs to her side, bends over her.*) Esther! Esther, my darling! What have we done to you?

### *The Curtains Close*

#### SCENE IV

(*The curtains open on the empty stage. The porch light is on. There is a light from an upper window. One hears the sound of a motor-car coming to a stop behind the house. The voices of Hadley, Johnson, and Louie Williams are heard speaking cautiously low.*)

JOHNSON (*off stage*)

We made it in twenty minutes.

(*Dr. Hadley enters followed by Johnson, Williams, and the Nurse.*)

HADLEY

The house is all quiet.

CHANTLAND (*opening the screen door, and holding it open for them to enter*)

Come right up, Hadley. I don't dare leave Esther alone a minute.

HADLEY

You can go back to the car, Louie. (*He goes.*) Come if I call. This is Johnson. He and the Nurse better come right up. Don't stay while I examine her, Chantland. Show us the room and then wait down here! I'll give you a first report as soon as possible.

(*Exit Hadley into the house followed by Johnson and the Nurse. Chantland then lets the screen door close and disappears. A moment after the four go in Elijah and Ira come out on the porch.*)

ELIJAH

No, don't wake Mother. Sorry to get you up in the dead of night, but you must help me. Everything is at stake. Esther is in danger of being taken away from here as a lunatic, and if they take her they'll make her one.

IRA

Can she stay here? I'm willing she should, but—what shall I do? Who are those people?

ELIJAH

That's Dr. Hadley with a psychopathic hospital attendant and nurse. They've got a car waiting ready to take her. Help me stop it!

IRA

Well, how?

ELIJAH

Offer to keep her here. Demand an examination by the County Commission. Dr. Sheldon is on that board. Hadley has a wrong idea of Esther's case, Dad. He mustn't be allowed to decide the question of her sanity. *(He looks quickly back into the house.)* Chantland is coming back here. Let's get where we can talk. *(He takes his father's arm, helping him walk. Ira transferring his stick to the other hand. They go from the porch toward the right rear as they talk.)* We have to plan quick and act quick. They may decide to take her right now. *(They go behind the house.)*

*(Chantland looks out, sees no one, hesitates, comes out on the porch, looks around, walks down and over to the spring. He sighs, fills a cup, drinks, meanwhile looking anxiously up toward the second story. He walks nervously up and down, waiting. Looks at his watch. Sits on a rock by the spring. Decides to smoke. takes out a cigar and lights it nervously. Gets up and walks up and down. Throws down the cigar and puts it out with his foot. He starts to walk away left front, but hearing footsteps in the house, stops and turns. Dr. Hadley enters.)*

CHANTLAND *(bracing himself)*

Well, Doctor?

HADLEY

I'm sorry to say that—what we feared seems to have happened. She's in a state of irrational terror. She is insanely afraid of Johnson, the Nurse and me.

CHANTLAND

Is she really—

HADLEY

Her present condition—the only hope is that it may be temporary.

CHANTLAND

You would say she is—now—

HADLEY

There's some hope that it may be temporary—the result of shock which will pass off. There seems to be no homicidal or suicidal impulse.

CHANTLAND

No reason for sending her—?

HADLEY

Not if you can take care of her at home. It will be necessary to have some responsible person with her all the time.

CHANTLAND

That is—!

HADLEY

There must be no time when she is not either confined or watched.

CHANTLAND

Hadley, I do not see how that can be done in my house by my family. As for hiring someone

to take care of her—you know what a professor's salary is.

HADLEY

The alternative, of course, is the hospital at Mt. Pleasant.

CHANTLAND

The hospital for the—the asylum. That's terrible! And yet—there is really nothing else to be done.

HADLEY

After a week or two of observation the physicians of the hospital staff may decide there is no need to commit her permanently.

CHANTLAND

Then they'll send her home?

HADLEY

In case she no longer requires constant watching. If she does, they will keep her there. If it is decided that she is to go, we should take her now in the car. It will be better than in the daytime or on the train.

CHANTLAND

Doctor, I see nothing else to do.

*(Elijah comes from the house, desperate.)*

HADLEY *(low to Chantland)*

Johnson has orders not to let Esther out of her room nor Robbins into it.

ELIJAH *(coming to Hadley)*

Good evening, Dr. Hadley. I wonder if you've been told that Esther suffered a bad shock half an hour ago on coming out of hypnotic trance?

HADLEY

Yes sir. I was given that information.

ELIJAH

You must allow for the fact that I was given no opportunity to quiet her. What is her present condition?

HADLEY

That of insane terror.

ELIJAH

Let me get her out of that.

CHANTLAND

You've done enough to her.

HADLEY

I've just said that I hope the present derangement may prove temporary.

ELIJAH (*flaring*)

There is no derangement! Don't you think before forming a conclusion that you ought to have my report of the facts?

HADLEY

Just to satisfy my own curiosity—yes. What are the facts?

ELIJAH

I had hypnotized her at a distance, and she came here. Her father came out, she was violently awakened, and the shock threw her into hysteria.

CHANTLAND

So you think, Robbins, that it is all my fault?

ELIJAH

Dr. Hadley, I have *hypnotized* her, I can do it

again. I can end her fear by the post-hypnotic suggestion that she have no fear.

CHANTLAND

So that's your view of the case, eh?

HADLEY

Really, Robbins, your "facts" are a little too much for me.

ELIJAH

I'll prove right now whether they are facts. I'll bring her down here in a sleep-waking state within fifteen minutes.

HADLEY (*looking at his watch*)

I haven't that much time to spend here, Robbins.

ELIJAH

Are you going? Are you leaving her here?

HADLEY

No, I am taking her with me.

ELIJAH

Where to?

CHANTLAND

That isn't your affair, Robbins.

ELIJAH

Are you taking her to Mt. Pleasant?

HADLEY

As Professor Chantland suggests—that is a matter to be decided by her family and her physician.

ELIJAH (*controlling his desperation*)

Just a minute! My father has a proposal. (*He goes to the house door and calls*) Father! (*No*



*answer.)* Just a minute. (*He goes hastily into the house.*)

CHANTLAND

I suppose we ought to hear what Ira Robbins has to say.

HADLEY

Certainly, we'll hear it. Are you aware that that young man is in a more dangerous condition than Esther?

CHANTLAND

Do you think he's insane?

HADLEY

His nerves are in an abnormal state of tension. His ideas are incredible. If something snaps—Esther is not likely to develop a tendency to violence. He is.

CHANTLAND

Ought you not to take measures to prevent it?

HADLEY

Johnson is an expert in handling violence. The chauffeur knows how to lend a hand.

CHANTLAND

If they are compelled to overpower him—what will you do with him?

HADLEY

Lock him up. I'll take him right in and turn him over to the authorities. (*Lowering his voice*) I could take him straight to Mt. Pleasant and have Judge Parsons make out the papers afterward.

CHANTLAND

Here he is. (*Elijah and Ira come from the house and cross to the others.*)

IRA

How are you, Dr. Hadley?

HADLEY

Very well, thank you.

IRA

My son tells me there is some question of taking Esther to Mt. Pleasant. Most unfortunate—the effect on her—the stigma. This house is large and quiet. Instead of closing it for the winter, we will leave it open for your daughter, Professor Chantland. Whatever attendants she needs—the fact that my son may be partly responsible entitles me to the privilege of paying their salaries.

CHANTLAND

This is very generous, Mr. Robbins. It does solve a most difficult problem for me. If Dr. Hadley—

HADLEY

It is exactly what she needs—the quiet of a place like this—the change—

CHANTLAND

And it may be possible to keep the whole thing from becoming known. There is only one thing about it that worries me, Mr. Robbins. (*Crossing to Ira*) Shall I speak frankly?

IRA

By all means.

CHANTLAND

I fear your son's interference in the case. He has wild ideas about his ability to cure her, and—

HADLEY

I would consent to her staying here only on condition that your son remain away.

IRA

That's not unreasonable, Elijah, after the interference you have already—I wish to accept Dr. Hadley's condition. Do you agree to it?

ELIJAH

I'd agree to anything to prevent Esther's being taken! But if you will get Dr. Sheldon here and let me state the facts to him—

HADLEY

What's to be gained by that?

ELIJAH

A fair hearing. If *he* thinks I ought to be given the chance to—

HADLEY

Either I shall be the physician in charge or I shall not. As long as I am, I shall not require your collaboration in the conduct of the case.

IRA

Isn't Dr. Sheldon chairman of the county commission which decides whether a patient shall be sent to Mt. Pleasant?

HADLEY

Yes, but where there is no conflict the board

merely endorses the decision of the attending physician.

ELIJAH

In this case there is conflict.

HADLEY

Not between the patient's family and her physician. (*To Ira*) Isn't Dr. Sheldon a personal friend of yours?

IRA

Yes, but he is so fair a man—

HADLEY

It is the custom to accept the decision of the attending physician.

ELIJAH

Are you afraid of an examination by the board, Dr. Hadley?

HADLEY

I certainly am not. You, yourself have more reason to be afraid of it than you are aware of.

ELIJAH (*looks at Hadley, then at Chantland, "getting them"*)

So that's how the wind blows! Well, I'm willing to take my chance.

HADLEY

I leave the matter to Professor Chantland.

IRA

It is no disparagement of Dr. Hadley to feel the desirability of more than one expert opinion on a matter of such consequence.

CHANTLAND

Nothing has been said to alter my reliance on Dr. Hadley's judgment.

ELIJAH (*going suddenly close to Chantland and looking him square in the eye*)

Do you want to get rid of Esther, Professor Chantland? Are your wife and daughters tired of having her—

CHANTLAND

That's an insult!

ELIJAH (*shaking his finger in Chantland's face*)

If you *wanted* a verdict of sanity you'd jump at the chance of reversing Hadley. You want to get rid of her!

(*Chantland strikes Elijah in the jaw. Elijah falls at Ira's feet, his hand closes on his father's stick. He grasps it, leaps up, and swings it down full force on Chantland's head. Chantland falls senseless. At this instant an hysterical scream is heard from upstairs in the far part of the house.*)

HADLEY (*shouts*)

Johnson! Louie! Help here!

IRA

What have you done, Elijah? (*Stooping over Chantland and trying to turn him.*) For God's sake Doctor, see how badly he is hurt!

(*Johnson runs out from the house, Louie from behind it.*)

HADLEY (*pointing to Elijah*)

Get him!

*(They seize Elijah, take the stick from him, He does not resist. Hadley turns Chantland on his back, feels his heart, finds he is breathing, bathes his brow and head with a wet handkerchief.)*

IRA

Only stunned?

HADLEY

Maybe a fracture.

NURSE (*within*)

*(Loud)* I need help! Where's the Doctor? The patient is raving—says someone is killing her father. *(Enter Nurse to Porch.)* Johnson, why don't you come and help me? *(She stops in astonishment.)*

HADLEY

Johnson, don't you leave that man. Don't let him get away from you! Nurse, go back to your patient. I'll get there as quick as I can. Johnson! Take that man, Elijah Robbins, and have him locked up. The charge is dangerous insanity.

IRA

Doctor—you don't think that's true, do you?  
*(Esther runs in.)*

ESTHER *(running to her father, kneeling, bending over him)*

Father! Father! Wake up! Father!

*(Esther turns on Elijah.)*

You struck him! You did strike him! I hate you! *(She turns back to her father.)*

ELIJAH (*stunned*)

Esther! (*He takes a step toward her—is stopped by Johnson.*) Esther! Listen to me. Esther! I'm sorry I struck him. He struck me in the face and I struck back so quick—it happened before I knew it. He can't be badly hurt. (*He takes a step toward her.*) Whatever happens—nothing can change the fact that "I am you, and you are me."

ESTHER (*wildly*)

I don't know what you are talking about.  
(*Elijah weakens in bitter disappointment.*)

HADLEY (*sharply*)

Johnson!

JOHNSON

Come on now!  
(*He takes Elijah roughly by the arm, and Elijah turns to go with him as*)

*The Curtains Close*

SCENE V

(*Next day. A beautiful Sunday afternoon. Mrs. Robbins is standing by the spring. The Nurse comes from around the house and starts toward the porch entrance. Mrs. Robbins goes to her swiftly.*)

MRS. ROBBINS

Nurse, I am so worried. Do tell me how Professor Chantland is.

NURSE

Dr. Hadley is the one to ask.

MRS. ROBBINS

But you know. Won't you please—

NURSE

Professor Chantland is no worse.

MRS. ROBBINS

Is that all that can be said?

NURSE

In *his* case that is a good report.

MRS. ROBBINS

But—you mean? In *her* case—?

NURSE

She is no better, and that is bad. It looks as though she was going to stay—

MRS. ROBBINS

Insane?

NURSE

As she is.

MRS. ROBBINS

What is it about her? In what way is she—different?

NURSE

She's afraid. She's feels that something dreadful is about to happen.

MRS. ROBBINS

To her father?

NURSE

Something dreadful.

MRS. ROBBINS

But you don't think, do you, that Professor Chantland is going to—going to die?



NURSE

Dr. Hadley thinks not unless there is some complication.

MRS. ROBBINS

But isn't that the only *really* dreadful thing that can happen?

NURSE

To know one is losing one's mind—Please excuse me, Mrs. Robbins, Dr. Hadley is waiting for me. (*She goes into the house.*)

(*Mrs. Robbins stands a moment, looking down in thought, then goes in.*)

(*Ira enters from the left front, deep in thought. He sits by the spring. Dr. Hadley comes from the house.*)

DR. HADLEY (*looking at his watch*)

I wonder why Johnson doesn't come. He and Louie have had time to do those errands three times. It's hard on me and the nurse.

IRA

Doctor, I want to let you know something. I telephoned Judge Parsons. He agreed to go with Dr. Sheldon to the jail and bring my son back here for examination. You could not expect me to accept your hasty action last night—ignoring the County Commission, railroading Elijah through to the asylum.

HADLEY

If I were you, Mr. Robbins, I would not be in such a hurry to have your son cleared of the charge of insanity.

IRA

What do you mean?

*(The sound of voices is heard off right.)*

HADLEY

There's Johnson at last. Excuse me, please. I don't care to say more, anyway. *(He goes back to look around the house corner. Voices are heard off.)* Why that's not Johnson.

IRA

Judge Parsons! Elijah must be with him. *(He goes to look. Mrs. Robbins enters from the house.)*

MRS. ROBBINS

Is that Elijah?

*(Judge Parsons and Dr. Sheldon come around the house.)*

IRA

Parsons, Sheldon—where is Elijah?

SHELDON

We thought he would come back here.

MRS. ROBBINS

Here?

PARSONS

Isn't he here? He escaped from the jail at noon.

IRA

Escaped?

SHELDON

We went there to get him and found him gone.

PARSONS

A turnkey failed to keep proper watch of him in the wash-room and he seems to have—

SHELDON

And he's not here?

IRA

No.

PARSONS

Then no one knows where he is or what he is doing.

MRS. ROBBINS

What can have happened to him?

IRA

He wouldn't go away and leave Miss Chantland here to—

HADLEY

Unless perhaps he became still more irrational.

SHELDON

How irrational was he, Hadley?

HADLEY

Have you heard that he struck Chantland over the head with a heavy stick?

PARSONS

Not the details.

IRA

I saw that. I must say I think anger alone is enough to account for it. An angry man is of course momentarily insane; but Chantland yielded to that before Elijah.

SHELDON

How is Chantland?

HADLEY

He is no worse this morning. Of course he was *unconscious* too long, but—will you take a look at him, Doctor Sheldon?

SHELDON

Yes, I'd like to. And suppose we also have a talk with Esther.

HADLEY

Oh, very well. (*He crosses to the house followed by Parsons and Sheldon.*) Professor Chantland is here in a room downstairs. (*Hadley goes in.*)

SHELDON (*passing Ira*)

I can't tell you how sorry we are about this.

PARSONS

You don't deserve it. It should not have happened to you.

IRA

Make sure everything possible is done for Chantland, Dick. It would be terrible to have him—

SHELDON

I certainly will. (*Stops.*) But if—well, no matter. I want to see him. (*Sheldon goes in followed by Parsons. Ira starts in.*)

MRS. ROBBINS (*stopping Ira at the porch.*)

What was it Dr. Sheldon started to say?

IRA

Perhaps it was—the same thing Hadley hinted.

MRS. ROBBINS

What was *that*?

IRA

It's only if. If Chantland should die—and Hadley does not seem to think he is in great danger—

MRS. ROBBINS

But what then?

IRA

Their idea is that if Chantland should not live—it might be better for Elijah if they do decide he was insane.

MRS. ROBBINS

Rather than be—oh!

IRA

Well, we're looking on the very blackest side of things now. (*Puts his arm around her.*) It won't be that bad. Shall we go in? I want to hear what Dr. Sheldon has to say. (*They go in, she crying, he patting her shoulder. A moment later Johnson comes running around the house, goes to the front door and knocks, then enters. His voice is heard inside the house.*)

JOHNSON (*within*)

Where is Dr. Hadley?

IRA (*within*)

He's having an important consultation.  
(*Johnson knocks on an inner door.*)

IRA (*within*)

I wouldn't interrupt—

HADLEY (*within, opening the inner door*)

Well, Johnson? (*He closes the door.*) Where

have you been? Do you think you haven't been needed here with two patients—

JOHNSON (*within*)

Can't I see you a minute alone? Come out just a minute. (*They come out quickly and cross to the stump.*)

JOHNSON (*low*)

Robbins broke jail.

HADLEY

I know that. What about it?

JOHNSON

Don't you want him caught? He didn't come here, did he?

HADLEY

No.

JOHNSON

He wasn't more than two mile from here twenty minutes ago. But we didn't see him on the road. He must be somewhere near. Don't you want us to keep lookin'?

HADLEY

Let Louie look for him. I need you here.

JOHNSON

Louie can't handle him and the car too.

HADLEY

He must be coming here anyway. All you need do is see that he doesn't slip in and hide here on the place. I'll give you fifteen minutes for it.

JOHNSON

If we get him shall we take him back to the jail?

HADLEY (*glancing toward the house*)

No. You will have to bring him — still — it would be a perfectly natural thing if—oh well. Bring him here and we'll have done with it.  
(*Johnson goes out rapidly around the house. Ira comes from the house.*)

IRA

Dr. Sheldon went up to see Esther.

HADLEY

He did? I want to be there. (*He starts in.*)

IRA

He said he would like to see Chantland again later. He wanted to talk with Esther alone, so as not to disturb her with the idea that she is being examined.

HADLEY

Oh. Did he say he didn't want *me* there?

IRA

No, no. It's merely that he didn't think all of you ought to go in there together as though—of course you see his idea—

HADLEY

Well—

IRA (*looking back inside*)

He is bringing her down.

SHELDON (*within*)

How would you like to sit out by the spring?

You like it there don't you? (*Enter Sheldon with Esther. He opens the screen door for her, his arm in hers. She starts back in fear, seeing Hadley.*) It's all right, my dear. Esther and I are going to have a little confab by ourselves. (*He leads her out past Hadley and Ira.*)

IRA (*opening the screen door and holding it open for Hadley*)

May I speak with you inside a moment, Doctor?

HADLEY (*after a searching look at Esther*)

Certainly, Mr. Robbins. (*He precedes Ira into the house.*)

(*Sheldon leads Esther to a seat beside the spring. He picks up a cup and fills it.*)

SHELDON

Have some? (*She pays no attention.*) I want a little—it looks so good. (*He sips it, looks at the cup. His attention being off her, she relaxes a little.*) There really isn't anything now to be afraid of, Esther. The shock you had would have upset anybody, but that's all over and done with, and now your job is to come on past it. Judge Parsons and I are here to straighten things out for all of you—and we're going to do it. You can just unload the responsibility from your shoulders onto ours. We haven't had any shock and we can stand it better than you can right now. (*No response.*) You don't need to keep so tense about it, Esther. Relax, and let us do the worrying. (*She lets her forehead sink*



*on her hand, and presses her temples.)* Does your head ache badly?

ESTHER

The two hurt each other.

SHELDON

Which two?

ESTHER

The inside and the outside.

SHELDON

Isn't that just a notion maybe?

ESTHER

If they don't stop—everything is going to—

SHELDON

Things aren't going to smash at all—that is just a notion that has got hold of you. Two good friends of yours and your father's and Elijah's are getting hold of things now so they *can't* smash. They are going to be all right. That's a lovely soothing sound, isn't it—that bubbling water? (*Esther stares at it with intense expectation.*) Here, here, you don't have to look at it *that* hard. (*He smiles but she pays no attention.*) Well—if you must—What do you see in it? There can't be anything so dreadful—in that beauty.

ESTHER

It's they!

SHELDON

Who are "they"?

ESTHER

They look like Black Hawk and Elijah First, but

they are really—(*She screams with fear. Her shoulders pull down and her arms tighten on her breast in a crouch that is almost convulsive.*)

SHELDON (*at her scream he gives a gasp before he can control his fear of her fear*)

Come, my dear—I had no idea—come away from it, if it frightens you. (*He stoops to her and tries to make her stand up.*) They aren't there really, you know.

ESTHER

Yes, they are! That is what *she* saw.

SHELDON

Who saw?

ESTHER

Nam-e-quā. Am I Nam-e-quā? No but it is worse, for they are really— Oh! Where is Elijah? He would know—he could tell me—

SHELDON

I think Elijah is coming here. I will see that he does come. Do you want to see him?

ESTHER (*hysterically*)

No, no, no! I can *never* see him, never—never—

SHELDON

Steady now, steady—take it easy, Esther. Easy, easy! There isn't a bit of need of any excitement about it. Quiet! We'll get you back up where you can lie down and—be a good girl now, and come on back to your room. That's better. (*He leads her into the house.*) Get

hold of yourself now, and calm down. You can do it. (*They go in.*)

(*After a moment Parsons and Hadley come out.*)

HADLEY

What do you think of that?

PARSONS

It seems terrible. Is it—?

HADLEY

Another access of hysteria. She has been like that on and off for fifteen hours. No nerves could stand a strain like that. She's racking herself to pieces.

PARSONS (*looking in the window*)

The nurse is taking her up. (*Sheldon comes out.*) What do you think?

SHELDON

She's gone.

HADLEY

Do you think there is any tendency to suicide?

SHELDON

I have an uncanny feeling that some queer sort of psychic suicide is going on in her now.

HADLEY

What do you mean?

SHELDON

It's as though one personality in her—were doing something to destroy another. Or rather—I believe that is how she herself imagines it to be.

PARSONS (*to Hadley*)

You say young Robbins claimed she was all right?

HADLEY

Claimed she was "not insane"—merely "hysterical from shock."

PARSONS

What do you think of that opinion, Dr. Sheldon?

SHELDON

That it is mistaken.

PARSONS

Would you say that the opinion indicates an irrational condition of mind in him?

SHELDON

A lot of us think wrong without going to Mt. Pleasant.

PARSONS

Dr. Hadley, will you state the grounds on which you lodged the charge of dangerous insanity?

HADLEY

Of course his violence. I had him locked up to prevent any more of it. He was suffering from two delusions: one that he had hypnotized Esther from a distance: the other that he could cure her.

PARSONS

Do you still, after thinking it over, consider it unsafe to leave him at liberty?

HADLEY

Absolutely.

*(The screen door opens. Ira comes toward them hopefully.)*

IRA

Well, gentlemen—? *(They are silent.)* Am I intruding, or—

PARSONS

No, Ira. There doesn't seem very much to say.  
*(After a moment Ira turns back to the porch. Sheldon follows with the impulse to say something. Parsons follows Sheldon.)*  
*(Elijah comes down from the hill. He is without coat, hat, or collar. He is out of breath. He intends to do God knows what to get to Esther.)*

SHELDON

Elijah!

IRA *(apprehensively)*

Elijah! What have you come to do?

ELIJAH

To see Esther. How is she?

SHELDON

Pretty bad, Elijah.

ELIJAH

You think so. I hoped—

HADLEY

You hoped wrong.

ELIJAH

I must see her—soon as I get breath. How is Chantland?

SHELDON

Slow in recovering from shock to central nervous system.

ELIJAH

Is she still hysterical?

SHELDON

Extremely.

ELIJAH

All this time.

PARSONS

Why did you break jail, Elijah? That hasn't helped your own case any.

ELIJAH

Had to get back here. Went to your office—you'd gone. I walked. That damned hound of Hadley's after me in car. Tell me, tell me! What did you find out about *her*?

SHELDON

Her nervous system seems to have given way. Some fixed idea. Cleavage of personality. Several hysterical affections—headache, contraction, positive hallucinations—

ELIJAH

That's important. What hallucinations?

SHELDON

She saw something in the spring that terrified her.

ELIJAH

What was it? What was it?

SHELDON

Let me see. She said: "They look like Black Hawk and Elijah First, but they are really—" and then she screamed with fear.

ELIJAH

That was not hallucination.

SHELDON

Not hallucination? Then I never—

ELIJAH

That was crystal-vision. Yesterday she saw Nam-e-quā in the spring; and today she must have seen Nam-e-quā's vision.

(*They stare at him.*)

HADLEY

Is he unable to distinguish between *her* delusions and reality?

ELIJAH

Nam-e-quā *did* see the vision of Elijah aiming at Black Hawk. Ask my father.

IRA

Yes, it's true—she did.

SHELDON (*looks first at Ira, then at Hadley*)

She asked whether she *was* Nam-e-quā.

HADLEY

The typical confusion as to her own identity.

ELIJAH

She thought that because she saw Nam-e-quā's vision.

SHELDON

I believe she finally decided that she *was not* Nam-e-quā. Then she asked for you—*said you* would know.

ELIJAH (*crossing eagerly to Sheldon*)

She did?

SHELDON

Then she changed abruptly and said she could never see you—and that brought on hysteria.

ELIJAH (*thinking*)

Black Hawk and Elijah have become symbols. Of what? That's the key to her fixed idea. If I could only get hold of that! That cleavage—it can't be beyond the reach of hypnotic suggestion. Dr. Sheldon, let me see her!

PARSONS

Elijah, do you realize that there is a charge of insanity against yourself? And that you have to meet it now? That is what Dr. Sheldon and I are here for. You cannot be allowed to attempt to cure an insane person while there is doubt of your own sanity.

ELIJAH

Am I talking insanelly? Do you talk to me as though I were insane? Dr. Sheldon, let me get to work. She has been left too long already in this morbid fear. You couldn't get her out of it, could you? Hadley couldn't. There is some reason to think I can. For her sake, let me try it!

SHELDON

I must say, Elijah, some of your ideas sound pretty wild to me.

ELIJAH

What ones? Examine me on them, and see if I can't defend them reasonably.



SHELDON

Well, your violence against Chantland, endangering his life—

PARSONS

Yes, doesn't that disturb your self-confidence?

ELIJAH

I'm sorry it happened—not that he didn't deserve it—but the shock to Esther.

PARSONS

Why did he deserve it?

ELIJAH

For his destructive interference! Also — he struck me in the face and I struck back. Is there one of you who wouldn't instinctively react so to a blow?

PARSONS

I had not heard that version of it. Is that true, Dr. Hadley?

HADLEY

I don't think so.

IRA

Don't think so? Why, of course it's true. Elijah fell back against me, clear to the ground, with the force of the blow.

HADLEY

My impression was that he went back to get hold of your stick.

ELIJAH

I fell close to my father, my hand closed on his stick. I had jumped up and swung with it before I knew it.

HADLEY

I detected his tendency to violence *before* he struck Chantland.

ELIJAH

I deny any such tendency. The only evidence for it was in Dr. Hadley's somewhat prejudiced eye; and it is now put forward after the event.

HADLEY

I described the tendency accurately before the outbreak.

SHELDON

I'd like to hear what Elijah has to say about the two delusions.

ELIJAH

Delusions?

PARSONS

They were first: a delusion that you hypnotized Esther from a distance. Second: a delusion that you could cure her.

ELIJAH

Dr. Sheldon, can't you clear away this rubbish? Don't you men know there's a girl up there in such terror that it is destroying her?

PARSONS

It doesn't look quite so simple to us, Elijah, as it seems to you. If this is so easy for you—why not take five minutes to answer it?

ELIJAH

Five minutes of Esther's agony! All right, damn you! Believing in telepathic hypnosis is not a sign of mental unsoundness. Dr. Hadley's sup-

position that it is based on scientific ignorance. To prove it please look at the first volume of the Bulletin of the Society for Physiological Psychology. It's there in the library.

HADLEY

I'll just have a look at that volume.

IRA

I can find it more quickly. Where, Elijah?

ELIJAH

Upper right hand corner, fourth shelf, under the statue. (*There is a short pause after Ira goes.*) Do you know what I feel here, Dr. Sheldon? You and Judge Parsons are kind, intelligent men, but I feel in you against me that bitter instinct in society to kill any new human power that might make the world different.

SHELDON

What new human power are we killing, Elijah?

ELIJAH

Esther's. Instead of being helped to develop her faculties she is made ashamed of them. She has to fight her father, Hadley, you, everyone, for the mere permission to exist in freedom and not in an asylum.

SHELDON

We know she is in a dangerous condition. Your own claims strike us as extravagant; you have been guilty of serious violence. Can't you see the obligation Parsons and I are under to scrutinize your state of mind? And honestly, Elijah, doesn't the idea of hypnotizing someone who

cannot see or hear you strike you yourself as a little off?

*(Ira comes with the book and offers it to Parsons)*

HADLEY

Just let me look at that. *(He takes it.)*

ELIJAH

Page 24. Seventeen successful experiments in hypnosis at a distance made by Dr. Gibert and Professor Janet at Havre with Madame B.

*(Hadley turns to the page and for sometime is absorbed in reading and skimming.)* Your question bears out what I said. Hypnosis at a distance is a human power, not new, but new to you, and what is your reaction? You take it as an indication of insanity. Dr. Sheldon, let me ask you this: if you had a patient under hypnosis and somebody interfered, waking her with violent shock, wouldn't you consider it your duty to reestablish hypnotic influence, and so get her back into a quiet, normal, waking state?

SHELDON

Yes, I would.

ELIJAH

That's all my delusion about my ability to cure her amounts to! I want to undo the mischief! How long do I have to make these damned debating points?

SHELDON

Can't you go a little more quietly, Elijah? You

are fairly plausible at times, but your ideas are unusual, and your manner—you'll need more coolness if you are to deal successfully with Esther. Ten minutes now can't make so much difference.

HADLEY (*slapping the book shut*)

Well, I've gone over that stuff.

PARSONS

Is it as represented?

HADLEY

It describes experiments of the kind mentioned, but—naturally one hasn't much confidence in an alleged scientific publication one never heard of.

ELIJAH

Dr. Hadley's ignorance of a publication does not prove its lack of authority.

PARSONS

Does the article describe telepathic hypnosis as a fact?

HADLEY

It attempts to establish the fact.

PARSONS

Dr. Sheldon, do you know this publication?

SHELDON

No. I never heard of it.

PARSONS

Would you have heard of it if it was authoritative?

SHELDON

I decline to make any such claim. I guess Janet is all right.

PARSONS

You mean he is an accepted scientific authority?

SHELDON

Yes; I should say he was not conservative but reputable.

PARSONS

In that case, the article disposes of the claim that to hold the belief in question is evidence of unsound mind.

HADLEY

There's no evidence that Robbins did it last night. Only his say-so.

PARSONS

His claim is not *prima facie* irrational.

ELIJAH

I offered last night to repeat the experiment. I offer again now.

HADLEY

Your "experiment" threw her into hysteria.

ELIJAH

Chantland's insane anger threw her into hysteria.

HADLEY

Accusing Chantland of that is characteristic of Mr. Robbins' condition.

ELIJAH (*starting toward the house*)

For Esther's sake! (*Sheldon moves to stop him.*)

PARSONS

Just a moment! Dr. Hadley, is it a conceded fact that, that whether from a distance or otherwise, Robbins did hypnotize Esther last night?

HADLEY

He must have. Finding her hypnotized was the cause of her father's anger.

PARSONS

Dr. Sheldon, what is your opinion of the possible harm to the patient of permitting Robbins to hypnotize her again now?

SHELDON

Her present condition is bad enough to warrant sending her to Mt. Pleasant. The attempt to restore her by post-hypnotic suggestion can't do much harm and might do some good. The circumstances make the idea seem sufficiently reasonable to me to try it and see.

ELIJAH

Thank you, Dr. Sheldon!

PARSONS

Very well. If he succeeds, it will dispose of both legal cases. (*He crosses to Robbins.*) Are you ready to try it, Robbins?

ELIJAH

Yes.

PARSONS

How much time will you require?

ELIJAH

Fifteen minutes. The nurse up there should be replaced by Dr. Sheldon who can observe her actions. (*Looks at Hadley. Speaks to Parsons and Sheldon*) I will not want to be hurried in handling her after she comes.

SHELDON

If she comes, he should have all the time he needs.

PARSONS

Agree to that, Hadley?

HADLEY

If there's anything to lead us to suppose she doesn't come by coincidence.

SHELDON (*Crossing to him*)

For Heaven's sake, Hadley, give the boy one fair square chance. Are you afraid he'll succeed.

HADLEY

I haven't the slightest hope of it.

PARSONS (*looking at his watch*)

All right, Robbins. We'll give you twenty minutes to bring her down here under hypnosis.

SHELDON

Hadley, will you come up with me and tell your people?

HADLEY

All right. (*They go into the house.*) We'll soon see the end of this nonsense.

(*Elijah takes a position by the spring facing the house and concentrates. Ira and Parsons look at him a moment.*)

PARSONS

I must say there is something uncanny—

IRA

Yes. But we should not disturb him. Shall we go aside?



PARSONS

Not beyond call.

*(They disappear around the house, leaving  
Elijah alone. After a long moment—)*

*The Curtains Close*

SCENE VI

*(Except in the light which is turning to red gold—the light of the Mississippi valley sunset—there is no change from the end of Scene V. In this scene the sunlight fades out and deepens as in the Prelude. Elijah is still in position as at the end of the last scene. After some twelve or fifteen seconds Parsons, Hadley and the nurse come in quietly from the left. They do not speak to Elijah. He is not aware of them. Parsons looks at his watch. A moment later Elijah speaks to himself.)*

ELIJAH

I can't do it! *(He sighs, gives it up, turns toward the spring. He starts slightly as he sees the three standing there. Hadley smiles.)*

PARSONS

We gave you five minutes over the twenty.

HADLEY

Ten more than he asked.

ELIJAH

I'm sorry. I ought to have gone up there to begin with.

HADLEY

I wish to say right here, Judge Parsons, that I

do not regard "going up there" as a harmless pastime, such as "hypnosis at a distance."

ELIJAH

I want to hear from Doctor Sheldon.

HADLEY

Nurse, will you please relieve Dr. Sheldon? Tell him the "experiment" is over and he can come down.

*(Ira enters from the house. The nurse passes him and goes in.)*

IRA *(crossing to Parsons)*

She didn't come.

PARSONS

We should not have let ourselves set quite so much hope on that solution.

IRA

After all, failure to do this now doesn't prove that he didn't do it last night.

HADLEY

I was expecting some such hedge.

IRA

Things were so different here last night—so serene—so beautiful. Such a thing could happen more easily at night than here in the daylight with so many around—and so much at stake—

ELIJAH

Nix, Dad!

PARSONS *(half to himself)*

The proposed proof of non-delusion has failed.

IRA

It doesn't *prove delusion*.

HADLEY

It opens a wide door to it.

(*Sheldon enters from the door and goes to Elijah.*)

SHELDON

She felt the influence unmistakably.

PARSONS

She did?

SHELDON (*still to Elijah*)

She said you were willing her to go down but she must not.

ELIJAH

Why did she resist it?

SHELDON

I don't know, but you could see her fight it off. She would start to fall asleep and then pull out of it. She got up and poured cold water on her wrists to keep herself from yielding.

ELIJAH

Let me go up there with you.

SHELDON

What do you say, Parsons?

PARSONS

I leave it to you—as medical, not legal.

SHELDON

I want to see what you can do with her face to face. Come on. (*They cross quickly to the porch. Elijah stops there.*)

ELIJAH

Better here, doctor. Get these others away, and bring her down here by the spring.

SHELDON

You think so? I had her here, and it was bad.

ELIJAH

Here with me where it happened before—in the sound of the spring. Get Hadley and the others away. Yes—here by the spring.

SHELDON

Well, I will bring her here, but—better luck than I had! (*He starts in.*)

PARSONS

Do you want us to—

SHELDON

If you please. I'll do all the watching that's necessary. (*Exit.*)

HADLEY (*to Parsons*)

Do you call that fair treatment? Don't you think Sheldon is pretty well ignoring the fact that I am Esther Chantland's physician?

PARSONS

I left it to Sheldon, and am satisfied to accept his decision. He must have a real hope—

HADLEY

Oh, all right. I suppose between friends you can fix it up pretty much as you like. (*He goes to the porch.*)

PARSONS

If we were in court, Dr. Hadley, you'd suffer the penalty of contempt of court for that remark.

HADLEY

If we were in open court there probably wouldn't be so much reason for making it. (*Mrs. Robbins appears in the doorway.*)

MRS. ROBBINS

Dr. Hadley: would you mind coming to see Professor Chantland—

HADLEY

Certainly. (*Hadley and Mrs. Robbins go in.*)

PARSONS

There's no justification for that. Sheldon and I have tried to be absolutely impartial.

ELIJAH

Can't we forget that man? Dad, would you mind going, too? She'll be here in a minute.

IRA (*turning to go*)

Success to you, Elijah. It will be magnificent if you can straighten her out.

PARSONS

I sincerely hope you can. (*They go behind the house.*)

ESTHER (*within moaning*)

No, no, no!

SHELDON (*within*)

But don't you remember? You said Elijah would know. You asked where he was.

(*Sheldon pushes open the screen door and appears with his arm around Esther trying to get her to come out.*)

He is here now—to help you—and I believe he can—better than anybody. (*He gets her out,*

*the screen door closes behind them. Elijah goes toward them.)*

ELIJAH

Please come, Esther—please.

*(She shrinks back trying to get through the screen door. He turns away.)*

You don't have to if you don't want to, but I wanted you to tell me what you saw in the spring.

ESTHER

No, no, no!

ELIJAH

All right Esther, Dr. Sheldon will take you back to your room, if that is what you want. But that will make things bad for you—and for me.

ESTHER

They are bad.

SHELDON

Maybe you'll find they are not so bad as you think if you'll talk about it with Elijah.

ESTHER

Not with Elijah! He is trying to kill me.

SHELDON

What nonsense, Esther. Elijah is trying to save you.

ELIJAH

Tell me what you saw in the spring, Esther. You've got it twisted.

ESTHER

I saw—*(She covers her face with her hands.)*

ELIJAH

What did you *really* see!

ESTHER

You wouldn't understand, but it's the truth. I saw it.

SHELDON (*low to her*)

Let's go away from the house. Dr. Hadley is in there and—

(*Esther shrinks into herself as though caught between Hadley behind her and Elijah in front.*)

ELIJAH

Esther, can't you pull yourself together enough to realize what is at stake here?

ESTHER

I realize too well.

ELIJAH

I don't mean that thing inside your mind. I want you to forget that for a minute and understand what I tell you. You are being afraid of the wrong things.

ESTHER

What is the right thing?

ELIJAH

The thing to be afraid of really is—the insane asylum! They are going to take me to Mount Pleasant, and you too—unless you can pay attention and understand what I say. Dr. Hadley has declared both of us insane. He would have taken you last night if my father and I had not prevented it. Your father consented. It was in the quarrel about that that he struck me.

ESTHER

*He struck you?*

ELIJAH

Yes. Didn't you know he did?

ESTHER

Then the picture in the spring—

ELIJAH

Was wrong. You read it wrong. You made it mean something it did not mean.

ESTHER

But they said you struck him—that is what I felt upstairs—he was lying on the ground senseless—you did strike him! You did!

ELIJAH

Afterward—after he struck. If you could only remember the things we talked of here last night. You've got things all mixed up. We have to get them straight—all this tragic tangle in your mind. You must sleep again as you did last night. Come. (*She resists, then yields.*) Here by the spring where we were. You loved it then. Sleep now again, and when you wake you'll be all quiet and unafraid.

ESTHER

If it wasn't for—

ELIJAH

Go to sleep, Esther dear.

(*She sinks down on the rock, he steadying her.*)

Sleep that is steadier than sleep. Sleep that does not change like dream but remains the same.

ESTHER

Oh how lovely!



ELIJAH

Yes, for all your trouble is dissolving into sleep.

ESTHER

Better than sleep—for I am dissolving—  
(*drowsy*)—It is all peace and beauty and love.

ELIJAH (*holding her hands*)

They have thought us insane, and perhaps we  
were. People cannot *become* each other as we  
did last night, and then be torn apart—

ESTHER

I have been torn apart.  
(*Sheldon draws silently back into shadow. The  
dusk deepens.*)

ELIJAH

Yes, we will talk of that and understand it. But  
first I must make sure of you. Do you remem-  
ber how you told me that I love you? Before I  
knew myself?

ESTHER

I remember.

ELIJAH

Do you remember saying "We will be lovers"?

ESTHER

I remember.

ELIJAH

Do you remember when we felt that we were  
each other?

ESTHER

I never will forget. (*She reaches up her arms  
to him.*)

ELIJAH

Esther, you did forget. Do you know what you said to me when they were taking me away?

ESTHER

I cannot remember well.

ELIJAH

I said "Nothing can change the fact that I am you." Do you know what you said?

ESTHER

No,—dimly, what did I say?

ELIJAH

You said—"I don't know what you are talking about."

ESTHER

She didn't know. That is what is the matter with her.

ELIJAH

Yes, you know. Now listen and remember. When you wake this time you must keep your waking self from being afraid. *You* know there is nothing to be afraid of.

ESTHER

Yes. There is. I cannot think of it now, but there is something dreadful,—something we must go through.

ELIJAH

You said you were not afraid—even of death—with me.

ESTHER

I do not know how to be with you when I am awake. She is so alone.

ELIJAH

She shall not be alone. When you wake now you will not forget that we are lovers. We will grow together in the most beautiful and perfect love. You will be one with your own waking self. There will be no fear. You will have a bridge of memory back to me and to your dreaming self.

ESTHER

That is what I need—but—

ELIJAH

But what?

ESTHER

We need to draw all together into one: but something is happening.

ELIJAH

What is happening? (*He turns and looks apprehensively toward the house.*)

ESTHER (*in fear*)

Something that will scatter us to pieces!

ELIJAH

No. Now you are getting back to that wrong thought about the vision in the spring. Did you see Black Hawk and Elijah First?

ESTHER

Yes. Elijah aiming at her father.

ELIJAH

And you thought they were really—

ESTHER

You aiming at *my* father.

ELIJAH (*happily inspired*)

Elijah First did not kill Black Hawk. He became his son. Why not I too?

ESTHER

Oh, can that be? If that can be it saves me too!

ELIJAH

Yes.

ESTHER

For they in the spring were your me and my father's me—destroying each other.

ELIJAH (*with understanding*)

I see, I see. That is why you said I was trying to kill you. You saw the death of one self by the will of the other, the inner image of the conflict between your father and me.

ESTHER

I can never be one again unless you and he are reconciled.

ELIJAH

I will go to him. We will be reconciled.

(*Parsons and Ira appear coming around the house. At a sign from Sheldon they stop motionless and are silent.*)

It is time for you to come back to your waking self. (*She rises.*) Come carefully over the bridge. The bridge will be stronger next time. This time you must bring memory. Come steadily. I am beside you, coming with you—

ESTHER

Teaching me to walk—on the bridge. (*They*

*pass from the rock on the left of the spring to the rock on the right.)*

ELIJAH

Teaching the lost way from inner to outer. You are coming safely, step by step, without fear—the reason for fear is gone.

ESTHER

For one will not destroy the other.

ELIJAH

Right. Now, slowly,—wake!

*(She opens her eyes, looks at him, looks around, not wildly.)*

Nice and quiet! That's fine! You are all here.

Now, dearest, remember—"I am you and you are me."

ESTHER *(looking at him trustfully)*

That is what we said—in a dream.

ELIJAH

And now you remember the dream.

ESTHER

Yes, but—I am—bewildered.

ELIJAH

But all one again and *not afraid*. Oh, Esther, you have saved us by waking like this!

ESTHER

I don't understand exactly, but I know you do, and I am glad.

ELIJAH

Shall I take you back?

*(She turns to go with him to the house.)*

PARSONS (*To Sheldon*)

Is that safe? Unprotected?

(*Esther and Elijah halt.*)

SHELDON

She needs about as much protection as the baby from the mother teaching it to walk.

PARSONS

Then the examination—?

ELIJAH

I can't think about it now, Judge Parsons.

SHELDON

The examination, as far as I am concerned, is over. (*He comes and shakes hands with Elijah.*) Congratulations, Elijah. In ministering to a mind diseased the physician need not be ashamed if he cannot quite compete with the understanding of love.

ELIJAH

Come, Esther. (*He puts his arm around her and they start toward the house. They are stopped by the appearance of Dr. Hadley in the doorway. He looks grave.*)

HADLEY

Professor Chantland is dead.

(*No one moves or speaks. They stand as though frozen. Total darkness sweeps across the scene as despair sweeps the mind. One hears a low moan, then another—Esther. Then a faint light dawns like the faint hope in the reviving mind of Elijah. As the light grows it reveals Elijah seated with bowed head on the left of the spring,*

*Esther fallen forward over the rock at the right. Ira sits on the edge of the porch floor, face in hand. Parsons is behind him. Sheldon is beside him, motionless, bending toward him.)*

IRA (*overwhelmed*)

The years of his youth in prison! His whole life blighted!

(*Johnson comes out beside Hadley who speaks to him inaudibly with a gesture toward Elijah.*)

ELIJAH (*fighting with forlorn hope*)

Esther! You can survive even this! Hold to yourself and to me! They will send me to prison, but not forever. No matter what comes, we are each other. Hold! Hold—and we will live through even this. Even though we wait ten years we will yet set sail into ourselves—we will yet see the shore of our new world!

ESTHER (*she slowly raises her bent-down body, and lifts up her head*)

My father's spirit will see more and must forgive me. For Elijah, I am you—you only. I am not afraid even of death—with you. I will wait for you. My mind can learn to live with you in prison. I will set sail with you into ourselves. I will go with you into that undiscovered country which is not death.

ELIJAH

Is it so? Then, for the first time, you are your whole self,—and even *this* is victory. The demons be damned!

*The Curtains Close*











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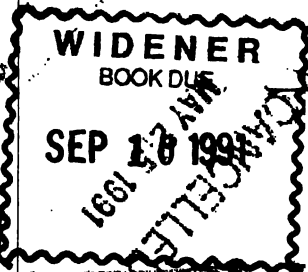
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